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INTEGRATIVE DISCIPLINE

IN STEPFATHER FAMILIES

by

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B.S., San Francisco State University 1970
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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF NURSING SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATIVE DISCIPLINE IN STEPFATHER FAMILIES

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The specific problem which emerged in this research was: Given the problem of the discipline of children, how do stepfather families manage to become integrated? The study encompassed integrative and disintegrative processes in these families. Social structural processes and patterns are also discussed.

Data for the study were collected in 1975-76 in the San Francisco Bay Area from stepfather families, grown stepchildren, stepmothers, and stepfathers: a total of 62 persons. The bulk of the information was gleaned from 30 one-and-one-half to three hour interviews, and 10 shorter interviews. In several instances, follow-up telephone calls were made. The participants represented a variety of social classes and ethnic orientations. Qualitative analysis was used to generate theory from the data.

The processes which enhance integration in stepfather families are contrasted in this study with the processes

which inhibit integration and result in partial or total disintegration of the family group. The specific research problem is addressed through the analysis of integrative discipline. The primary processes implementing integrative discipline are rule making, the establishment of rules for family behavior; rule enforcing, the process of rule maintenance; friending, the behaviors by which the stepfather reduces fear in, and gains the confidence of the stepchild, and integrative undermining, a process whereby the stepfather reduces the mother's power position by aligning himself with the child in a dispute over discipline. Contrasting processes which tend to disintegrate the family are unfriending, behavior which estranges the child, and disintegrative undermining, in which the stepfather's discipline is undermined by the mother, leaving the stepfather odd man out. The analysis includes temporal aspects, (the time it takes the family to reach a condition of homeostasis); social-structural processes (the reordering of power positions, and the creation of rule making and enforcing patterns); and communication patterns (patterns which determine the relative social distance of the family members.)

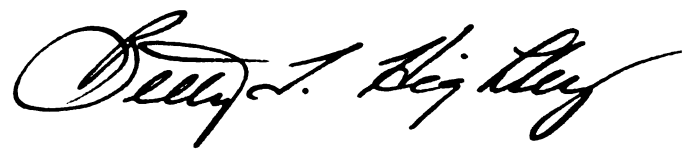
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Betty J. Higley". The signature is written in black ink and is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND GUIDING PERSPECTIVES

Dear Abby: I was a divorcee with 6 children for nine years. Then I married a man who is ten years my junior. My two youngest children made their home with us. All of the others were on their own. The last two are now 17 and 18, and neither is sufficiently mature to leave home. Maybe it's my fault for not pushing them hard enough, but the fact remains that they still need me. My husband has issued an ultimatum: 'Either your kids go or I do. I am tired of supporting them.' Abby, my love for this man is indescribable, but I can't send my children away. How much do I owe my husband? My children? Myself?

Torn Apart

Dear Torn: In my opinion, a man who would give his wife such an ultimatum knows that she will choose her children--which is what I think he wants.

San Francisco Chronicle

What happens in stepfather families? The focus of the present research study is the discipline dimension in the integration of the stepfather family. The study also encompasses the undermining of discipline and disintegration, for as the plaintive letter above to "Dear Abby" illustrates, a stepfather family can go either way, toward integration or disintegration, and the children of the mother are often the focal point of conflict. It was, in fact, the disintegration of the marriage of a stepfather who was a friend of mine which helped me make the decision to embark upon the present research. My friend said he had

entered his marriage with high hopes. He had some concern about his wife's school-age daughter, whom he hardly knew, but he thought "it would all work out." He and his wife, he said, came from different backgrounds, and their ideas about childrearing were miles apart. They had different notions of what the rules should be for the child, and they had opposing ideas about how the rules should be enforced. His wife's ideas, he said, "of course were wrong." When my friend tried to "improve" the behavior of his stepdaughter by reprimanding, his wife interfered. The spouses were soon in heavy conflict. Battles which began over discipline for the child moved to other areas. "It wasn't really the kid's fault," said my friend, "my ex-wife just didn't raise her right."

Cultural differences abound in this country, and spouses often come together from vastly different backgrounds. They try to subsume their values about childrearing into a synthesis of family rules which will suit members and time. However, it is difficult to compromise one's values about childrearing: a foreign method for controlling the behavior of children seems "wrong" even if it is efficient. When parents enter into a relationship where the man of the house is the new or stepfather to the mother's children, the problem of synthesis of values is compounded. The stepfather family involves not only the marriage partners with their perspectives of proper child-controlling methods, but the child as well has developed a set of values about what is normal in childrearing. From the point of view of all of these persons,

there is a right and a wrong way of doing things, but seldom is there an in-between.

When children are born to spouses in an intact home, each parent has a biological right over the child; each has full child management privileges. Everyone in the family has a biological right to be there. In a stepfather family, the man comes into the marriage as spouse to the wife. He has no biological rights over the children, and in the beginning he does not have child management privileges, he can only be granted these privileges by the mother. In a stepfather home, only the mother and child have a biological right to be together. Therefore the power positions of the mother and stepfather are unequal. When there is a conflict over child-controlling methods, it is the mother who has the biological right to decide the issue. The stepfather attempts to discipline the child, and the mother who disapproves of his technique, may undermine him. Having one's discipline undermined is always unpleasant, but when one is attempting to take on child management duties, being undermined is devastating. Conflict ensues. The stepfather is outraged, the child is unhappy, and the mother is torn between her love for her husband and her child. The family, instead of becoming integrated, is at the point of disintegration. The mother may see no course open to her but to write a letter to Dear Abby.

In 1975, there were over 1,000,000 divorces in the United States. Nine times out of ten, the physical custody

of the children of divorce was awarded to the mother. (Walters, 1976). Four out of five divorced persons remarry according to figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau, and it has been estimated that 70% of remarrying persons "bring ready-made families into the new union" (Kiestler, 1976, p. 82). In a recent study in San Diego, it was found that 9% of the families living in that community were headed by a stepfather. (Bohannon, 1975). An earlier study showed that the reconstituted family contained a stepfather three times as often as it did a stepmother. (Bowerman and Irish, 1962). These statistics attest to the magnitude of the population of stepfather families in the United States.

The divorce rates are not available for remarrying persons with children, but divorce for remarried persons overall was 59% as opposed to 37% for first marriages. (Kiestler, 1967, p. 82). When second marriages involving children degenerate, the problems to the individuals can be even more grave than a first divorce. The mother and child have seen a prior relationship dissolve, and often the stepfather has as well. The individuals in the failing marriage are repeaters, second-time losers. Conversely, some stepfather families manage to integrate and solve their childrearing problems with a minimum of pain. The problem of integration in stepfather families has not been addressed by sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists or developmentalists. However, when stepfather families do not become integrated, they often come to the attention of health professionals. Family and

marriage counsellors, and family health nurses do not have guidelines to help stepfather families solve their conflicts. No studies exist which explain the process whereby stepfather families can solve their child-rearing differences and become integrated.

The purpose of the present research is to develop a grounded substantive theory which will explain the sociological aspects of the integrative and disintegrative processes in stepfather families which center about problems of child-rearing. By "theory" I mean an explanation of most of the action in the social scene. The intended impact of this study is to explain and predict the process of integration in stepfather families, around the problem of childrearing. The development of the theory is intended to aid in the education and practice of professional nurses. An additional intended outcome of this study is that it will contribute to family, sociological and nursing theory.

Specific Problem

The prominent problem of the present study emerged during the examination of the interactions of the individuals and the structural conditions which typify the basic social-psychological and social-structural processes in stepfather families. In light of the absence of previous studies on the integration process in stepfather families, it was

necessary for me to discover the basic social-psychological problem in the integration of stepfather families. I could not approach the families with a preconceived theory to apply to their situations, because no theory existed. Therefore, it was only after many hours of interviewing families and examination of the data that I was able to discover a researchable problem, the examination of which would explain most of the variation in processes and patterns of behavior which occurred. The problem as well as the theory which emerged, were grounded in the data.

The study was not conducted according to guidelines gained from a specific theoretical framework. However, prior to the collection of data, I sensitized myself through a knowledge of the concepts developed from existing studies of stepfamilies, theories of fathering, and theories of family therapy. This prior knowledge enabled me to see more of, and to understand better, the data as it was collected. As the analysis of the data proceeded, however, concepts emerged from the data itself. Concepts thus grounded in the data were linked to existing theory only when the pre-existing theory had relevance to the social world under study. The temptation to force the data to fit pre-existing theory was resisted at every step in the analysis.

Data for the present research was collected through interviews with stepfather families and grown stepchildren living in the community. My aim was to talk with families who were living or who had lived the stepfather family life:

those who were integrating or disintegrating without the aid of advice from health professionals. I wanted to discover how they managed to become a cohesive unit, the problems they encountered along the way, and the variety of ways in which they solved those problems. Early in the collection of data (at the first interview) the problem of conflict over discipline emerged as one which troubled the stepfather family. However, it was not until the problem appeared time after time in subsequent interviews that I was willing to accept it as the salient problem for research.

The specific problem which emerged in this research was: Given the problem of the discipline of children, how do stepfather families manage to become integrated? This problem is addressed through the analysis of integrative discipline and its implementing processes. Discipline is defined as methods for teaching children to behave in ways approved of by their elders.

Integrative discipline constitutes the central variable which explains the basic social processes in the study. The analysis encompasses the problems, conditions, dimensions, properties, patterns and strategies which occur in the social scene. The outcome is a dense theory which explains the action. The primary processes implementing integrative discipline are rule making, the process of establishing rules for family behavior; rule enforcing, the process of rule maintenance; friending, the behaviors by which the stepfather reduces fear in, and gains the confidence of the stepchild,

and presents himself as a person of value to the stepchild; and integrative undermining, a process whereby the stepfather reduces the mother's power position by aligning himself with the child in a dispute over discipline.

There is no attempt to describe the unit of stepfather families per se. Stepfather families come in all shapes and sizes, but certain processes occur in varying degrees in all of them: all stepfather families integrate or disintegrate and all children are taught something. The theory of integrative discipline attempts to explain the conditions under which the processes occur, the properties of the processes, the dimensions of the conditions, and the variation of the outcomes.

Among the questions which can be addressed using the analysis of integrative discipline are:

1. In a stepfather family situation where only the mother has a biological right over the child, what means used by the stepfather to assume management duties are acceptable to the mother and child? What rules can be agreed upon easily? What are the conditions which make agreement about discipline expedient? What are the timetables for integration?
2. In the presence of differing ideologies about discipline for children, how are the rules, once made, communicated to the child? What are the structural conditions formed as an outcome of the patterns in which rules are communicated?
3. Faced with a condition where the child resists rule-making and enforcing by the stepfather, and the mother undermines his attempts to enforce rules, what are the means by which the stepfather can make an ally of the child? At what point does the mother relax and allow the stepfather to assume an equal child management role? What strategies employed by the stepfather trigger her relaxation?

These general questions may be considered a sample of the complex analysis of the data. The focus of the study was on the interaction between the individuals involved and the meaning the interactions had for them. Assumptions emerged based on patterns of interactions. Individual cases provided an analysis of the variation of the patterns.

Stepfathers, Families, Integration, and Discipline: Perspectives

The present research was not conducted following guidelines laid down by a pre-existing conceptual framework, but the point of view of the study was influenced by existing theory which related to the problem at hand. A philosophical perspective was derived from the work of interactionists: both sociologists, and family therapists. Relevant to the study was the research on fathering, particularly that which deals with child rearing methods, studies of children in fatherless homes, and stepfathers. Studies of the process of integration had limited fit for the present research. A study of management succession had relevance.

The symbolic interactionist approach of Herbert Blumer (1969) influenced many of the methodological and analytical decisions for this study. Blumer's view is that actors make decisions on the basis of the meaning which things have for them, and that interaction is based on these meanings. Further interaction and meaning, according to Blumer, is based

on the interpretation of the interaction by the individuals. The content of the interviews, and the analysis of the content, was influenced by Blumer's view. Blumer's approach is a refinement of the social-psychological perspective of George Herbert Mead (1964). Mead's work had a profound effect on the work of present-day sociologists and therapists. Mead's point of view of the relationship of man and society concentrated on the interaction of the individuals as the focal point of study for sociology. Mead suggested that the state of mind of the individual changes on the basis of his interaction with society. The work of Harry Stack Sullivan (1935) was influenced by Mead. Sullivan's position was in opposition to Freud. Freud (1938) attributed the action of the individual to intrapsychic processes. He contended that there were forces present within all individuals which created conflict in his development. Sullivan, on the other hand, suggested that what goes on in the mind of an individual is the result of social interaction.

Sullivan paved the way for the philosophy of treatment known as family therapy. Family therapy theory is relevant to a study of integration in a family because the emphasis is placed upon communication in the family rather than on intrapsychic processes.¹ The communication theorists, especially Jackson (1957), Haley (1969) and Satir (1967) view the family as an interactional system. Considering the family as a system has advantages in a study of integration; from this stance, the mother and child can be considered as

a going system at the time of the marriage, the stepfather an outsider who enters the system. According to this theory, his entry would cause changes, a disequilibrium, within the system. Another important point in system theory is that what affects one part of the system affects the entire system. From this point of view, it is clear that conflict between two members in a family would affect the entire family. Therefore, disharmony between the stepfather and child would affect the marital pair. Each of the three communication theorists above made a special contribution to the family therapy theory, all of which have a bearing on the present study. Jackson (1957) developed the system approach to therapy, and first advanced the concept of homeostatis. This concept refers to a balance within the family system.² It was Jackson's point of view that family members change positions within the system but that there are certain parameters within which they operate. In his words, family homeostatis, "Implies the relative constancy of the internal environment, a constancy, however, which is maintained by a continuous interplay of dynamic forces." (p. 79). Homeostatis in Jackson's view had to do with consistency, and resistance to change. A healthy system is one in which roles of individuals are flexible within the framework of homeostatis. In a sick system, roles tend to be rigid.³ The stepfather family, then, could be considered homeostatic when the ways in which the members relate to one another are fairly consistent. Jay Haley (1969) saw communication as a power struggle between

interactants. In any situation involving two or more persons, according to Haley, the interactants involved constantly attempt to redefine their relationship in terms of power. When one person in the family holds all the power, relationships become distorted. The child in the family who feels powerless, according to Haley, may have to take on symptoms to use as a weapon. Haley's position has relevance to the present study if one views the interactants as in a power struggle over the discipline of the child. Taken to the extreme, the stepchild who feels powerless, may take on symptoms as a weapon.

Virginia Satir's contribution was in the area of communication of feelings. People can't be free to act independently, according to Satir, unless they are free to communicate their feelings, nor are they free to really know one another. It was Satir's position that all feelings are respectable, and that when interactants fail to convey their feelings, they are leaving out the most important part of themselves. In Jane Howard's book, Please Touch (1970) Satir says:

There are four wrong ways people communicate. You can blame, you can placate, you can be irrelevant or you can be 'reasonable.' There's something incomplete about each way. The blamer leaves out what he feels about the other person, the placater leaves out what he feels about the subject being discussed and the irrelevant one leaves out everything. (pp. 149-150).

From this point of view, the stepfather and child who do not convey their feelings to one another cannot get to know one another; therefore the family cannot become integrated.

Some of the roles which family members assume have been identified by family therapists. A role adopted by a member is a part played to preserve the system and maintain homeostasis. The scapegoat is a good example. The child who is constantly scapegoated serves to divert attention from a disturbance between the spouses. As described by Ackerman (1966), when the marital pair are in conflict, attention is focused on the scapegoat and the system is preserved. A scapegoat is a child in a powerless position who begins to feel as if he is bad, and feels that it is proper that he continue in the role. The concept of the scapegoat may be used in the present study to identify the child who is a behavior problem and who is attacked with harsh discipline by the stepfather with the approval of the mother. Such a child has no champion, and is in a powerless position. A stepchild kept in this role long enough would begin to adopt bizarre behavior according to family therapy theory, because he feels he is bad. Another role which is adopted in families is that of go-between. The go-between has been described by Gerald Zuk (1966). The go-between role is usually taken on by the mother in the family. The go-between acts as a switchboard between family members, and relays communication from one member to another. In so doing she effectively blocks direct communication between other family members. Understanding of the go-between role is relevant to the present study because it is a natural one for the mother to assume when the stepfather enters the family. It is the mother who best knows both step-

father and child and it is fitting that she introduce one to the other. According to Zuk's theory, however, a maintained role of go-between forces distance between the other family members by preventing direct communication.

Theodore Lidz, an early family therapist, is generally credited with rediscovering the father. For several generations, the role the father plays in the development of the child was all but ignored. Credit for making or breaking the child was given to the mother. Lidz (1967) maintained that the child needed both a mother and a father to develop normally. Lidz's work concerned the psychosexual development of the child. He spoke of the family matrix, an early view of the family system. The child, according to Lidz, needs two parents, one to model himself after, and one to desire if he is to develop normally. He maintained that a parental coalition is needed to preserve generational boundaries. Without this parental coalition, said Lidz, the child will have difficulty resolving his oedipal conflicts. Lidz pointed to the importance of communication patterns in the family. He said that the child learns gender-linked roles by watching the parents interact, and by the ways in which the parents communicate with the child.

Studies of the childrearing practices of the father tend to support his importance in shaping the personality of the child. Generally, fathers in the past have encouraged dependence in girls, independence in boys. However, it is the father, rather than the mother, who can foster independence

in the girl or the boy. On the other hand, fathers tend to be stricter than mothers and they spank boys more often than girls. (Biller, 1974). An abusive parent is more likely to be a father. Resnick's study (1969), showed that twice as many fathers were child-murderers as mothers.

Research on the development of children in fatherless homes has been an important source for understanding the role of the father in the family. Early studies by Sears, Pintler, and Sears (1946), showed that pre-school boys in father-absent homes were less aggressive, and girls were more aggressive than pre-school children in father-present homes. Subsequent research in the past thirty years substantiated this pattern. Boys of school age, after associating with other boys, begin behaving aggressively. However, the mathematical skills of both boys and girls suffer when the father is absent, especially in the early years (Lynn, 1974).⁴ Of particular importance to the understanding of the role of the father was a study by Hetherington (1973). Her study with adolescent girls showed that girls who grow up without a father tend to be shy and avoid male contact when compared with girls from intact homes.

The bulk of the research on the loss of the father due to death or divorce shows that the child in his grief may either idealize the father or resent the fact that he has left the child alone. The child may have both of these reactions at one in the same time. (Siggins, 1966).⁵ The importance of this reaction of the child to the present study is obvious

when one considers that the deified biological father may interfere with a relationship with a surrogate father.

The research on stepfathers has been extremely sparse. Since 1940, there have been twelve studies published which deal with stepfamilies. The focus of three of these is on the stepmother with only a passing mention of the stepfather. (Smith, 1945, 1953; Simon, 1964).⁶ The legal status of the stepfather was reported by Merian in 1940. Kaufmann, Peck and Tagiuri (1954) in their study of the incest dynamic grouped stepfathers with biological fathers. The studies of Bowerman and Irish (1962) and Duberman (1973) looked at the relationships between stepparents and children. The former study of 29,000 high school children, 2,000 of which were from step-homes, showed that these children generally had greater difficulty relating to stepmothers than stepfathers, but that teenage girls were more distant from fathers than mothers, whether they were stepfathers or biological fathers. In the latter study, Duberman found that sex of the children did not differentiate their relationship with a stepparent, but that children's relationship with a stepfather tended to be better than with a stepmother. However, 64% of the stepparent-child relationships was excellent. Further evidence that children adjust well to a stepfather relationship can be found from an NIMH research project conducted by the Western Behavioral Science Institute in La Jolla, California. A summary to the NIMH reported that the mental health of children in stepfather families equals that of a

comparison group from intact homes. (Bohannon, 1975).

Two other publications emerged from the La Jolla project, a survey of the literature (McCormick, 1974), and a secondary analysis of two public opinion surveys. The analysis showed no difference in a comparison between adults from stepfather homes with those from intact homes (Wilson, Zucher, McAdams, Russell, 1975). Maddox (1975) has published a book containing existing theories on stepfamilies, a review of the artistic literature on stepparents and stepchildren, and some excerpts from interviews. Two studies of stepfamilies with emotionally ill children are of interest. Mowatt (1972) reported on multiple couple therapy for three stepfathers and their wives, and Fast and Cain (1966), reviewed the case studies of stepfamilies in therapy. Both of these studies showed discipline to be a problem area. In the former study, the mothers of the children tended to be dependent and invited the stepfather to discipline the children, and then blocked his effort.

In the study of Fast and Cain, the stepparent was a stepfather three times as often as a stepmother. "Role confusion" was identified as a problem; the stepfather and mother were both uncertain about whether he should assume the role of parent or non-parent. Three problem areas were identified: a denial that any problems existed, hypersensitivity on the part of the stepparent and third ". . . and perhaps most damaging to the stepchild, was the parents' united focus on the child as the source of all dissension and threat to the

marriage itself." (p. 488). The authors suggest that a different role be assumed by a stepparent, a non-parent role: "Attempts to reproduce the nuclear family in the step situation are doomed to failure." (p. 490).

Studies of integration of larger societies are of limited value to this study. The research on establishment of norms in small groups has some value, such as the study of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1970), and certainly the decision regarding what is normal in matters of childrearing are necessary for integration in the family. As Scott (1970) points out, ". . . an important generalization is that the more cohesive the group--that is, the more attractive it is to its participants--the higher the conformity to its norms." (1970, p. 220). Following this line of reasoning, the stepfather family which is most attractive to all of its members will be the one most easily integrated.

Related to integration is Gouldner's study of bureaucracy in a modern factory (1954/1964). Gouldner outlines the succession of a new manager in the factory. The stepfather is a successor to the father. He attempts to assume a child management role in the family. The stepfather, however, does not have the options open to the manager in Gouldner's study. The surrogate father cannot bring in his own lieutenants as Gouldner's manager did, nor can he fire malcontents, and his ability to use the formal structure used by Gouldner's manager is limited at the beginning of the marriage, because the mother has not granted full management

privileges to him. The stepfather's use of the informal structure in the family is also limited, because he doesn't know the family system.

The existing research involving stepfathers and their families has generally focused on static conditions: adjustments, mental health, and roles. The process of integration including the discipline dimension has not been examined. The various theories outlined above when seen in relationship with one another provide a basis for relating the theory of integrative discipline to existing sociological and family therapy theories. The present study attempts to generate a theoretical explanation for the social-psychological process of entry of a surrogate father into an already functioning family interactional system of mother and child, and the social structural processes involved in the assumption by the stepfather to a child management position.

Footnotes

1. Ackerman (1958) cites Cannon (1938) who used the term homeostatis in relation to the continuity of the body system in an everchanging environment. Cannon suggested that mental systems were homeostatic, and that higher social systems had a homeostatic quality--a means for maintaining equilibrium. Ackerman uses homeostasis to explain the continuity of the mental state in spite of the onslaughts of society. He also spoke of the homeostasis of a dyadic relationship. Ackerman is generally called the "father" of family therapy, because although he maintained the importance of the intrapsychic state, he gave equal importance to extra psychic influences, primarily the family. It was Jackson, however, who first used the concept of homeostasis to explain the dynamics of family life. Jackson was influenced by Laforque (1936) and von Bertalanffy (1966). Jackson developed the concept when he observed that when the schizophrenic member of the family began to get well, either another member became ill, or the family forced the schizophrenic member to return to his sick way of behaving. In this way the family unit did not change, it was still a homeostatic sick family.
2. A history of family therapy, and the views of major family therapists, is contained in an excellent work by Foley (1974), An Introduction to Family Therapy.
3. For a "Criteria For Assessing Family Strength" see Otto (1963). Otto recruited members from healthy families to develop the criteria, one of which is flexibility of roles.
4. David Lynn covers the research to date on the father in his book, The Father: His Role in Child Development (1974). In 1962, John Nash was able to do such a review of research on fathers in one article. Lynn's book, although slim, attests to the renewed interest in fathers in the past decade.
5. Also of interest is the study by Crumley and Blumenthal (1973) in which they found that when fathers were temporarily absent due to military service, the children grieved for them in much the same way as a child who permanently loses a parent. At the return of the father, the child was shocked to meet the real as opposed to the idealized parent, and felt resentment at the difference, at the fact that the father had left initially, and at the fact that the father had returned to displace the child who had been accustomed to the total attention of

Footnotes (continued)

the mother. Relating this to the present study, the father of divorce may meet a similar resentment. The stepfather likewise may be resented by taking away the mother's attention.

6. Helen Thompson (1966) wrote an advice book for step-parents, The Successful Stepparent. The book has one chapter on the stepfather.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGIES: THE RESEARCHER, THE RESEARCHED, THE RESEARCH

The Researcher

My experience as a nurse extends backward into a past so distant that I remember a time when stepfathers were relatively rare. It was a time when divorces were spoken of in hushed tones. It was at that time that I received my basic education in nursing at Mount Zion Hospital School of Nursing in San Francisco. For nineteen years, I worked more or less continually in a variety of health care situations: with paraplegics, as an office nurse, as an emergency room nurse, but most often, as a maternity nurse. In 1966, I returned to school, and in 1970, I received my B.S. degree in Nursing from San Francisco State University. Following the attainment of an M.S. degree in Maternal-Child Nursing from the University of California, San Francisco in 1971, I taught maternity nursing and family nursing at California State University, Hayward. In 1973, I entered the Doctor of Nursing Science Program at the University of California, San Francisco. The topic for my research had already been selected.

I have a profound interest in the subject of the present study; I have been a member of a stepfather family since my husband came to live with my daughter and me eighteen years

ago. The fact that I had "lived it" gave me a purchase on the collection and analysis of data. My peer status made my inquiry more palatable to the families interviewed, and my confession that the integration of my family had followed a rocky path, made the family members more willing to divulge the problem areas in their situation. Like any data collector, I had a pre-formed notion of what I would find. No researcher enters the field with a mind completely clean of ideas about the subject. As Blumer (1969) says:

. . . the research scholar will unwittingly form some kind of a picture of the area of life he proposes to study. He will bring into play the beliefs and images that he already has to fashion a more or less intelligible view of the area of life. In this respect he is like all human beings. (p. 36.)

In the analysis of the data, my life experience helped me select processes which reflected the social world under study. When I was on the right track, I knew it! However, although I had a pre-formed notion of what I would find, developing a grounded substantive theory to explain the action forced me to validate my suppositions in the data. The data did not support the theory I had constructed in my head, and I was forced to abandon it early on. The concepts which emerged from the data not only altered my prefabricated ideas of the study; it forced me to look at my own behavior as a mother in a stepfather family. From the standpoint of the effect of the research on the researcher, I confess that the findings applied to myself were sometimes shocking.

My preparation for the collection of data began with an intensive search of (actually for) the literature on stepfathers. The yield was paltry. My decision to include the

whole family in my investigation of the stepfather came after pursuing a course of study and practical experience in family therapy. My study included five quarters of family dynamics, theory and therapy and three quarters as co-therapist in single and multiple family therapy situations.¹ This experience enhanced my ability as an interviewer.

Negotiating Entry

I anticipated more difficulty in gaining entry to the homes of stepfather families than I actually encountered. The families were referred by colleagues, in the main, and they had been approached about participating in the study. There were more than twenty families. The makeup of the study population is described in detail later in the present chapter. I contacted the family by phone. I generally talked with the mother in the family, who first wanted more information, and then asked for time to consult her husband. Therefore, most interviews required two introductory telephone calls. Some families were reluctant to participate at first. I tried to "sell" the interview by sounding as warm and charming as possible (the symbolic act of taking the part of the other--trying to sound the way I thought they would want me to sound). After the first few interviews, I was able to use the persuasive argument, "most of the families I've talked with kind of enjoyed it." The families were concerned with the time the interview would take. I had

anticipated that a time period of ninety minutes would be sufficient, but I had to admit that the interviews sometimes stretched into three hours. Very few people (only five) refused my request. Some families had to be interviewed as separate members, and in one case it was necessary to invite the members one at a time to my home--access to their home was restricted. The mother in the household was finally persuaded to participate after an offer to make lunch for her at my house. At that, she called me the night before the scheduled interview and cancelled out. On a chance, I called her the next morning, and she finally agreed. After lunch and three drinks, she admitted that she had felt shy about talking with me, but that she was really enjoying the experience. I made a special effort to gain her cooperation, because the family was a particularly disorganized one, and I thought that what they had to tell me was especially important. In a few instances, interviews were not held in the home of the participants. One young woman, a grown stepchild, was bedridden attempting to preserve a pregnancy, and asked to have the interview over the telephone. This was done. Two of the health professionals who were stepfathers were interviewed in their offices, and one grown stepchild was contacted by mail. For the most part, I went to the home of the family. I asked to talk with the whole family. The time scheduled, the choice of the participants, was generally in the evening.

The families I visited welcomed me graciously, but their

tension was obvious. Most offered me some refreshment-- generally coffee or tea, but sometimes wine or other liquor. I always accepted the offer of coffee or tea because it set a tone of sociability which I wanted to encourage. I did not accept alcohol because it impairs my ability to concentrate, and this was the reason I gave. I usually spoke with the wife of the family on the telephone and the husband always wanted more information about the research, specifically, "Why are you doing this study?" I answered honestly that my primary reason for doing the research was "to get a doctorate." My candor generally elicited an open-mouthed, stunned reaction. It was a calculated maneuver. I wanted to find out what these people really thought, and I was not after polite conversation. It has been my experience in my long life as a nurse that in trying to "move in close" in the short time allotted to the task, an off-the-wall comment such as mine often startles people into becoming more open than they had planned. It's a quick way of breaking down defenses. I followed my initial response with a short account of my own experience as a member of a stepfather family, and expressed my desire to gain information which I, and other nurses and health professionals might use to help other stepfather families, "get along a little easier than I did--we had some hard times." This established me as a peer, and one with flaws. This was another maneuver which I had found helpful in the past. Although I was extracting information, I wanted to give the impression that it was because I was an interested

human, to whom they could tell their troubles as well as their triumphs. I did not want to present myself as a stiff nurse-scientist who might judge them. I reasoned that if the participants did not feel "safe" with me, they would not tell me what their life was really like. I devoted a great deal of attention and energy to gaining entry. As Schatzman and Strauss (1973) advise:

Considering that people's privacies are to be 'invaded,' that commitments to their work and even their very identity are likely to be called into question, it does not take much imagination to realize how tactical error, blunder, or social crudity can complicate an otherwise worthy project--not to mention the cost to the researcher of having to find a new site or to abandon a study altogether. (p. 22).

My approach was one of casual warmth. I used humor to put the families members at ease, and this approach was successful. Typical was the reaction described in my field notes:

I sat in one chair, thinking the couple would sit on the sofa, and I could look at both of them, but Virginia sat on the sofa, Gene on the opposite chair. This gave me a feeling of great distance. And indeed, as above, Gene was quite careful in his speech at first. My first jokes to ease things fell flat, but as we went along, Gene eased back in his chair, laughed a little, and although physically further away, socially, we were closer.

(Gene and Virginia, 115/75, p. 3).

My original plan for gathering data called for several interviews with each family, because I anticipated a reluctance on the part of the participants to "level" with me. Considering that entry had to be negotiated with each family, I expected that it would take several attempts to gain the confidence of the family members. However, my experience as a

nurse interacting with patients was immeasurably helpful. I am accustomed to asking people questions about areas of their lives which are generally shielded from public display, and I am well trained in the art of following through on verbal and non-verbal clues. The fact that I am a nurse--the title of it--helped to put some people at ease. Many of the people I interviewed expressed a confidence in talking with a nurse. Entry was sometimes more easily executed than exit. This is discussed in my field notes:

Folks sure to like to talk. Most of these visits are made during prime TV time, but once they settle in, I can hardly get away. I do all those things like closing the notebook, saying I don't want to keep them, and still they hang on. When I made the appointment with Dorothy, she said she was not sure they had too much to talk about. Karl, at the beginning of the interview, wondered aloud about the ability of the various members to be able to express themselves honestly in front of one another. The house was a ninety-five mile round trip from good old San Carlos, and at 9:30 p.m., I was quite anxious to get away. But they had so many one-more-things-to say. When I finally left, Karl, who had been quite stiff at first, wanted to lead me back to the freeway with his car.

(Karl and Dorothy, 11/11/75, p. 5)

Study Design

The field study approach of this investigation was aimed at the generation of grounded substantive theory. Data was gathered from a variety of sources which are described in detail in the following section. Whenever possible, whole families were interviewed together. This approach was developed

by psychologists and psychiatrists at Yale, Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto and NIMH. As Broderick (1971) describes this method:

Generally speaking the constructs grew out of observing patterns of interaction in real families over time. This is in direct contrast to the typical sociological method of interviewing a single member of a family about its structure . . . Mostly, the new approach gets at rates and types of interaction and patterns of participation. (p. 150)

This study was designed to uncover the processes at work in the stepfather home, rather than describing the unit. Description of a unit involves counting sexes, races, ages, and time, and the findings are restricted to the unit studied at the time it is studied. Discovering the social processes basic to a situation, however, transcends the unit studied.

For instance, the present research looks at integration in stepfather families around the dimension of discipline. It is immediately apparent that stepfather families everywhere must go through some process of integration or disintegration, otherwise, they could not live together. If they give up living together, they are disintegrating. In this study discipline is used broadly and includes teaching. All children go through a disciplining process: not teaching them anything is teaching them something. Basic processes are "social-psychological" and "social-structural" according to Barney Glaser.² An example of a social-psychological process is becoming, another is legitimating. A social structure process is one in which social structure is established, such as bureaucratization. Every social situation has social-

psychological processes and social-structural processes which are basic to the interaction in the scene. A basic social process is one which explains what is going on: it explains the basic problem which most concerns the persons in the social scene. Once discovered, it pervades the data; it accounts for most of what is happening.

Data Collection and Analysis

The processes of collection and analysis are conducted in concert in the research method used in the present study. As conceptualization occurs, further data is collected to expand, delimit and link categories. It is natural for the human mind to try to make sense of what occurs. Therefore, it is not possible to collect data without simultaneously reflecting upon it. If the reflections are not recorded, at the time they occur, they may be lost.³ Likewise, if clues are not followed, by collecting data to explain what the investigator thinks is happening, a theory which pervades the action may not emerge. In the method called grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), data is collected using conventional field methodology. Then data are compared one with another according to a system called "constant comparative analysis." Further data is collected to enhance the emerging theory (theoretical sampling), to expand or delimit it. The various processes of the research enterprise have been separated here for ease of explanation.

Data Collection and Data

The theory from this study was extracted from approximately eighty-five hours of interviews, one two-hour step-parent class,⁴ and one letter. The collection of data extended over ten and a half months, from June, 1975, into May, 1976, but the process was interrupted for periods of analysis of data. The bulk of the information was gleaned from thirty long interviews with stepfather families, couples, grown stepchildren, teenage children, families with step-mother and stepfather, stepmothers alone, and two former stepfathers. In several instances, follow-up telephone calls were made to add to the data from the interviews, to clarify points, or to verify a suspicion that a family member had something more to add in private conversation with me. These phone calls were generally made to mothers, but stepfathers were also contacted. The information so obtained was often quite helpful. Other data was obtained from shorter interviews of thirty to forty minutes with grown stepchildren. Face to face contact was made with sixty-two persons, and the study includes data on one hundred and thirty-two parents and children. Many of these persons were no longer in the household. The out-of-home group included ex-spouses, grown children and stepchildren, and children living with another parent.

Demographic data was collected on all individuals in the study. The sample included a variety of geographical and

ethnic orientations. Persons interviewed lived in eight Bay Area Counties, and two other states: New York and Missouri. The character of the San Francisco Bay Area is such that most of the residents come from somewhere else. The population for this study hailed from three foreign countries, and nineteen of the United States. Only seven of the parents were born in California. The families ranged in social class from working to upper middle class. Educational level included tenth grade to doctorate. Professions represented included health, education, and several of the sciences. There were representatives from the arts, clerks, construction workers, engineers, middle management, and several small businesses. Most of the mothers worked or went to school. Only three families attended church regularly, but a variety of religions were represented: the bulk were Christians and Jews. There were more Protestants than Catholics. Six families involved mixed ethnic marriages: five Jew-gentile, and one Spanish-surname and Anglo-Saxon. One young woman was Black, one mother and three children were of Mexican-American descent; the rest were Caucasian. There were no Orientals. The ages of the parents in this study ranged from twenty-eight to sixty-one. The youngest child at the time of the marriage was under two, the oldest, nineteen. Each age group was well represented. Fifty-one children were involved; thirty-eight had stepfathers, eleven stepmothers, and two were children of the new marriage. All but seven of the stepfathers had children from a previous relationship. Eleven of these chil-

dren shared the household with the mother's children, and the others visited at least part time. Length of the marriage ranged from nine months to twenty-seven years. There were two unmarried couples living together, one couple for three years, the other for twenty months.

A few stepchildren were interviewed alone, all were teenagers. I had planned to talk with smaller children by themselves, but the information from the interviews was confidential. I reasoned that I would be unable to advise a parent to seek treatment for a disturbed child if I had promised not to repeat anything which was told to me. Therefore, children of under teen age were interviewed only in the presence of their parents. All families were given a list of three family therapists for reference, and I advised a few families that I thought therapy would be helpful.

Recording

I took liberal notes during the interviews. I learned to write without looking at the paper, and this helped my observation of non-verbal clues. The interviews were generally held in the evening and often at a location far from my home. Therefore, I waited until the next morning to make typed copies of field notes. Interview material was grouped together in segments. Comments about the segments were placed in separate sections and labeled, (TN) for theoretical

notes, (MN) for methodological notes. This is a scheme suggested by Shatzman and Strauss (1973).

Data Analysis

In the discovery of grounded theory, a method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the central research process is constant comparative analysis. The method involves the continual comparison of data to data, concept to data, concept to concept, and linked concepts (conceptual categories) back to the data. The implementing processes of constant comparative analysis involve both inductive and deductive work; the substantive theory emerges from the data, and is verified in the data:

Thus generation of theory through comparative analysis both subsumes and assumes verifications and accurate descriptions, but only to the extent that the latter are in the service of generation.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 28)

The goal of the constant comparative method is to discover, to generate substantive theory, rather than to apply existing theory to data to explain it. The aim is to unearth the processes at work in the social scene which, when linked together, form a core variable which explains the action in the scene. The process of constant comparative analysis involves the identification of conceptual categories and their properties, the dimensions, the conditions, the strategies and the outcomes. Put simply, the grounded theorist is

attempting to discover the processes which are going on and their scope, their coordinates, their extension (the dimensions); the contributing processes (properties); what is going on when they occur (conditions); how they are forced or fended off (strategies) and what happens then (outcomes). The processes can be either social-structural (who ends up in charge) or social-psychological (what are the meanings to the actors on which they base their interactions). Conceptual categories when linked together are subsumed into theoretical constructs, until the core variable emerges. When checked against the data, the core variable integrates the data, until a dense web of theory evolves. The process of constant comparative analysis can be considered the core variable of the discovery of grounded theory. It consists of a variety of processes which, when linked together, explain the generation of substantive theory.

The systematic comparison of theory to data safeguards the researcher from logical excursions to explain data. An example from the present study may be used to explain this process. Several spouses told me that because their backgrounds were similar, the adjustment for the family was easier. The explanation made perfect sense (it was logical), and I accepted it as fact, until I checked it against my data. Faced with the information in my field notes, I was forced to conclude that backgrounds of the spouses had little to do with the adjustment of the whole family: maladjustment and ease of adjustment occurred in families where the background

of the spouses was similar and dissimilar. The concepts must earn their way into the theory by virtue of their relevance to the empirical world. Specific processes in the analysis are described in the following sections.

Generating Categories: Finding Linkages. Coding is a way of taking data apart and reassembling it to form hypotheses. The first step is an open coding in which the investigator finds what is there through substantive coding of the data and tries to find linkages. This step is followed by theoretical coding. Theoretical coding is a way of relating concepts. Substantive codes are pulled from the data. They are often words used by the actors. Such codes would include "liking," "leveling," "identifying," and "modeling." The substantive codes are noted in the margins of the field notes, and the data is marked to indicate where the process occurred. The next step in the analysis is linking the substantive codes together in some form that makes sense to the investigator. From these linkages she forms sets of things (categories) "in an ever increasing density of linkages." (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973, p. 110).

Theoretical codes are ways of ordering the data and ways of interrelating the substantive codes. They are a way of establishing the dimensions of the categories. Examples of theoretical codes are causes, conditions, consequences, contingencies, covariance, context, strategies, cutting points

and phases. Theoretical codes must be fitted to the data as carefully as the substantive codes. For example, it is useless to order the data in terms of strategies if strategies are not an important process in the social scene. Theoretical codes must have relevance to the empirical world.

The linkages in the data often emerge with the help of a diagram, such as a four-fold table, or an interacting model (Lofland, 1971, pp. 1-54). When substantive codes are ordered into categories, they are constantly compared with other indicators already in the category. In this way the properties of the categories are established. The properties of the categories are compared with other properties of other categories to find interchangeable indicators. In the present study, "undermining" was found to be disintegrative in some instances, integrating in others.

Saturation of the Categories. As the theory begins to emerge, to take shape, the investigator becomes committed to a theoretical scheme. In this way she delimits the number of categories considered. The theory is delimited in another way. After a number of incidents have been coded into a category, "theoretical saturation" takes place. It becomes apparent that the properties of the category have been established, and that "one more incident" will not aid in explaining the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 111). The categories are saturated through a process called theoretical

sampling. Once the categories have been delimited, the investigator sets about finding the properties of the category. Sampling becomes a conscious effort to find the limits of the categories, and the dimensions of the properties. For example, in the present study, an effort was made to find out if the friending property of "coming through" was as meaningful to a six-year-old as a twenty-six-year-old; then the significance of the property to a mother was compared to the meaning for the child. At some point in the collection and analysis of data, it is apparent that the emerging theory explains most of the action. It is a time when the researcher can feel that for the present theoretical scheme, it is time to stop. This does not mean, however, that everything in the social scene has been investigated and analyzed; it means that for the present study, saturation is at hand.

Selective Coding. Selective coding is a process of reduction. Reduction is engaged in in the search for core variables. By reduction is meant the grouping of substantive categories, or variables, under an index which will subsume a number of other categories. It is a search for a category of a higher order which will explain more of the action. As an example, the categories of "leveling," "liking," "teaching," and "modeling," first considered separately in the present study, were found to be sub-categories, or properties of the higher order category, "friending."

Emergence of the Core Category. Through the process of reduction and comparison, the core variable for this investigation emerged. Integrative discipline seemed to me to explain most of the variation in the social-psychological problem of the research: it explained most of the ways in which integration is achieved in a stepfather family, given the problem of the discipline of children. Once discovered, the data was re-examined to determine the fit of the core variable. Segments of the data and the theoretical scheme were shared with nurses and sociologists, and it was the consensus of these colleagues that the core category did indeed explain the problem.

Memo Writing. Memo writing is a way of capturing a conceptual scheme before it is lost. At certain points when the data is being coded, an idea will strike, and if it is not recorded, the researcher will lose the thought. Memos are ideational, but they are sparked by the data, and in this way they are grounded. As the analysis proceeds the mind of the researcher becomes steeped in the data. Ideas for analysis occur at an uneven pace and at unlikely hours. These ideas are captured first on scraps of paper; later on typewritten pages, or cards. The data which sparked the memo is noted. Memos linked with other memos, always grounded in the data, enrich the conceptual schemes of the analysis. These notes on the analysis can be reworked, or sometimes tabled for a

future study. They can be a few words or several pages.

One of the most vital steps in the analytical process is the sorting of memos. In this process, memos are sorted into piles, and the writing becomes a "write-up" of memos which have been organized in such a way that the best integration of the theory is achieved. To neglect this step yields a linear, thin, report. Memos can later be resorted to to produce a paper with a different focus. Sorted memos provide the organization for the manuscript.

Writing the Theory. The theory which is presented in this study is based on several hundred pages of coded field notes, and approximately two hundred and fifty sorted analytical memos. Every effort is made to substantiate the theory with incidents from the data. The theory, then, emerges from the data in the writing as it did in the analysis. The style of the written report is an integration of theory, findings, and discussion.

On the pages which follow, I have attempted to satisfy two objectives: to present the components of the theory in a framework which is both clear and interrelated, and to provide a picture of the participants in the study through segments from the data, which will allow the reader to enter the world of the stepfather family.

Footnotes

1. For a sampling of family therapy approaches, descriptions of multiple family therapy, and accounts of nurses as family therapists, the reader is directed to the work of the following authors: Bulbulyan (1969), Durell (1969), Friedman (1974), Kimbro, Taschman, Wylie, and MacLennan (1967), Laqueur and LaBurt (1964), Leichter and Schulman (1974), Mereness (1968), Tescher (1971).
2. Many of the methodological directions described in this paper derive from the qualitative analysis seminars of Barney Glaser, of the sociology program, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, School of Nursing, University of California, San Francisco. I participated in these seminars for five quarters, 1975-1976.
3. From an unpublished memo of Sue Jackson, University of California, San Francisco.
4. The stepparent class was offered through Canada College, Redwood City, California, under the instruction of Ursula Shepherd.

PART II

FINDINGS: THE DISCIPLINE FOCUS

Chapter 3

INTEGRATIVE DISCIPLINE: DEFINITIONS, TEMPORAL ASPECTS,
UNDERMINING CONDITIONS

The point this study makes is that stepfather families do not start out being integrated, and some never become integrated. The way in which differing points of view about childrearing are settled, determine the social structural patterns in the family. Some social structural processes are integrating, others are less so, leaving one member left out, or discounted. When stepfather families do not achieve integration, the outcome can be divorce or a sick member, and it is then that these families come to the attention of health authorities. This study points directions toward integration, taking into account the problems of discipline, by contrasting family strategies for gaining control of child management which lead to integration with those which do not. Part 1 of the present chapter defines the implementing processes of integrative discipline, and contrasts them with disintegrative processes in discipline. Part 2 deals with temporal aspects which affect integration and discipline. In Part 3, conditions which undermine the processes of integration and discipline are discussed.

PART 1

Integrative Discipline

Stepfather families solve the problem of becoming an integrated whole while managing the discipline of children through a process which I have named integrative discipline. Integrative discipline comprises three supporting processes: rule making and rule enforcing, friending, and integrative undermining. Rule making refers to the process of establishing rules for family behavior. Rules formulated are worthless unless they are observed. Rule enforcing refers to the process of rule maintenance. Friending refers to the behaviors by which the stepfather reduces fear in, and gains the confidence of the stepchild, and presents himself as a person of value to the stepchild. Integrative undermining is an in-roading on the powerbase of the mother which is allowed by mother and child, and which has properties which tend to unify the family, with the end result that no one is left out of the action. Integrative discipline then is a method of teaching the young which will allow a stepfather family to come together as an integrated unit.

The Integrated Family. Totally integrated families do not exist in the real world--total integration is a heuristic concept, as is total disintegration. Stepfather families in

this study emerged as being engaged in the social-psychological processes of integrating or disintegrating. Families were more or less integrated or disintegrated, they weren't there. Integration and disintegration were considered the theoretical end points on a continuum, and families were considered to have attained a greater or lesser degree of integration. By this measure, a family which has attained a high degree of integration can be defined in the following ways. It is one in which members have a feeling of solidarity. They have evolved conceptions of what is normal family behavior for the various members. There is relatively equal participation in family business, and family affection. In high-degree integrated families, the members have fairly equal status (given the necessarily higher status for adults because of wisdom, needs met capacity and legal control). All members have a feeling of belonging there, no member is constantly scapegoated (a child-left-out pattern). All members are reasonably accessible to one another, it is not necessary for a member to speak to another member through a third member acting as go-between. More integrated families have boundaries which are sufficiently well established so that the family is accessible to the outside world: the children have friends, the adults have friends, and the household can tolerate friendly visiting from the outside. The more integrated family is one where members are sufficiently relaxed with the state of family life so that they can get on with the business of growing and maturing.

Indicators of Integration. A general impression made of a variety of indices was the criteria I used for considering a family's degree of integration. My impression came from watching the family interact, and from the things they told me about their family life. The variety of indices included the following: When children were present at the interview, they participated freely. They talked with the stepparent as comfortably as with the parent, and contradicted the stepparent as freely as the parent. When children were not present (some parents considered interviews grown up business) the stepchild was described by the stepfather as a worthy individual and the tone of the stepfather was one of warmth and obvious pleasure. Children participated in family decisions in more integrated families. Decisions over recreation are a good example of a family problem in which all members can aid in the solution. As the stepfather Earnest put it, "By the time this family decides what to do in the way of recreation, the day is almost gone--it has to be something we all want to do " (9/29/75, p. 10).¹ In these more integrated families, the stepfather and child spent time alone in mutually enjoyable or profitable pursuits, such as school homework, sports activities, or going to the dump.

Other activities were reported which could be considered integrating activities. Integrating activities included efforts on the part of a stepfather to improve his parenting style. Roy (11/6/75) took a growth and development course so that he could better understand what to expect from his

pre-school stepson. Justin learned to admit his mistakes. After an outburst of anger over some trifle, he confessed to his stepsons, "Sorry guys, I guess I bombed out again, didn't I?" (5/15/76, p. 1). Another indicator of integrating activity is a stepchild who begins to model himself after the stepfather, or claims about his stepfather, "Well, he's not my real dad, but he's my dad " (Ivan, 3/11/76, p. 10).

Some indicators proved to be unreliable. I found that the child using a paternal name like "dad" for the stepfather, or the use of the stepfather's surname, were not reliable indicators of integration. Mothers who want the new stepfather-child relationship to "take" try to push paternal names, hoping the integration will follow. They call the stepfather "dad" whenever the child is present. Most stepchildren don't use the stepfather's surname for two reasons: (1) They usually have another father somewhere who is paying child support and would object to the change, and (2), the child's name is part of his identity, and not given up easily.² A grown stepchild who was convinced as a child by her mother that using the surname of the stepfather at school would constitute an advantage, remembered, "I hated it, because it wasn't my name " (Erica, 2/15/76, p. 3).

Disintegrative Discipline

Processes opposing integration in disciplining have been

discovered to exist in stepfather families. These processes I have called disintegrative discipline. The opposing processes here include rule-making and rule-enforcing attempts, unfriending, and disintegrative undermining. Disintegrative discipline is a process of child control which does not integrate the family, leaving at least one member out of the action. Unfriending behavior does not reduce fear in the stepchild, does not gain his confidence, and does not gain for the stepfather an image of value in the eyes of the stepchild. Disintegrative undermining involves attempts by the stepfather to discipline the child which are undermined by the mother. The outcome is disintegrating: one member is left out of the action. This study attempts to delineate the differences between integrative discipline and its implementing processes from the opposing disintegrative discipline and its implementing processes.

The remaining pages of this chapter deal with the temporal aspects of rule-making and rule-enforcing: the phases of the shake down cruise, and with the conditions which exist in stepfather families which undermine rule-making and rule-enforcing. These conditions cause disintegrative undermining to occur. Integrative undermining and friending will be discussed only insofar as they help explain temporal aspects or the undermining conditions.

PART 2

Temporal Aspects: The Shakedown Cruise

Stepfather families describe a period of one and one half to two years of living together before "things settle down." This period can be divided into two phases; the grace or trial period, and the phase of jockeying for position. The jockeying for position phase occurred for all the families in this study, but the grace period often did not occur if the child was under school age or was a spirited teenager. During the shakedown cruise, family members learn about one another, "what makes everyone mad." It is a time of social structural process, when the rule-making and enforcing patterns are formed, and a time when the tone is set for the relationship.

The Grace Period

Most stepfather families enjoy a grace period, or reprieve early in the relationship in which struggles around discipline are held in abeyance or discounted. The condition of long acquaintance or cohabitation before marriage allows the grace period to occur beforehand, otherwise, the calm follows marriage. The grace period corresponds to the

honeymoon enjoyed by childless couples. In the absence of seclusion, the couple glosses over childrearing conflicts in an effort to demonstrate the aproblematic quality of the stepfather family arrangement. They ignore the problems. The conditions which allow the grace period to exist are a preoccupation of the couple with their own relationship, a make-do attitude on the part of the stepfather who has accepted a package deal, social amenities, and a child which is willing to wait and see what will happen. Those conditions which cause the family to fall from their state of grace are those which reify the relationship. Too many changes, for instance, will end the grace period: demands for changes in behavior, or a change of location for the family, a move. The time perspective of the grace period is a few weeks to a few months, depending largely on the age of the child, the quality of the demands for change, and the time it takes for reality to spoil the dream.

The relative calm of the grace period can occur even with pre-school children on occasion, because the stepfather does not concern himself with the deportment of the child in the first stages of the relationship with the family. He can tolerate antisocial behavior, because he believes that time, and his influence, will change the ways of an unmannerly child. So it is that a stepfather who gives an instruction to a four-year-old in the first days of marriage, can be amused at the stepson who answers, "Who's going to make me!" and laughingly say, "It's what I expected." (Fred, 6/7/75,

p. 2). Later in the relationship, he finds similar antics less amusing.

Hope for the future and good manners are two of the conditions which help maintain the grace period. When Carolyn and Gregory were married, they had a "happy family concept." They thought they would become a happy unit, "With Greg the dad, and I would be the mother of course." (10/24/75, p. 2). Zelda, a mother of a child who was just six when she moved into her lover's home, found herself stepmother to Jerome, eleven, and Verna, six, "The first six months were like a honeymoon " Zelda was glad to be there. She said Zane was immersed in the relationship to the extent that he forgot his troubles on the job and the kids "seemed to get on " (9/23/75, p. 3).

Social amenities help maintain the relationship, as everyone tries to be on his best behavior in an effort to make it all work. Errol (9/11/75), for instance, said he never liked his stepdaughter Carla very much, "but at first everyone was polite " (p. 4). Related to good manners, being polite is the fresh start concept. Resolves are made to "be better this time." Typically, there has been a time of reflection between marriages on what went wrong with a first marriage. The new relationship, then, is regarded as a time for resolves to undo the past. The mother, for instance, who transmitted messages between father and children in a first marriage, may resolve to avoid that responsibility in her new union, "Well, I realized I acted as a go-between for

Lester and the kids, and I made up my mind that I'm not going to do that again " (Brenda, 3/8/76, p. 1).

A mother's attempt to maintain the grace period can act to put increased pressure on the child, and her purpose is defeated. The mother makes an attempt to display a presentable child. Old habits which had been acceptable, now become glaring imperfections. Beth (6/7/75) hoped her boys would behave, and was embarrassed when her four-year-old son reacted to Fred with defiance. Jessica (7/13/75) became more strict with the children when she got married, suddenly aware of how slovenly they had become. Extra pressure on the part of the mother is a condition for termination of the grace period as children become resentful of this burden added to the weight of adjustments demanded of them. Small children react by becoming more defiant, older teenagers leave home.

An attitude of acceptance of the maternal-child package on the part of the stepfather helps to maintain the grace period for a time. Common is the stepfather who marries because of the love he has for a woman, hoping as he does so that living with the maternal-child package will work out somehow if he has "an unshakable love for the woman " (Karl, 11/11/75, p. 7). Most men who marry a package have pondered over the advisability of the move, and once making the commitment, attempt to "keep things smooth" for the first few months. As men ponder life with a package, they may decide marriage is worth the gamble. One such man is Dale. Dale (3/11/76) said that he accepted the fact that to marry Gail meant marrying

Gail and the boys--that it was a unit. Therefore, he tried to do the best job he could being a parent to the boys. Other men wait until they are sure they can tolerate the package deal. Gene (11/5/76) loved Virginia, but he said he would not have married her unless he had liked her child, Essie. Gene said the most important thing to consider in a stepfamily is that, "the stepfather makes sure he likes the child before taking the plunge." Gene gave this advice to another potential stepfather (p. 2). Having made his move, the stepfather will, for a time, usually grin and bear it.

Age Dimensions. The existence of the grace period is largely dependent on the age of the stepchild. Teenagers often encourage a new marriage until they realize it will mean major life changes for them. Adolescents encourage a new marriage for a mother about whose future they are concerned. This condition holds true, in the main, for older teens ready to leave home. Older adolescents are concerned that they will not be able to depart the scene unless their mother is cared for by a new husband. A grown stepdaughter remembered that she favored a marriage for her mother as did her brothers, because they had outside interests, and were ready to attend college. They wanted someone other than themselves to be responsible for their mother's welfare (Shelley, 7/13/75, p. 6). The grace period ends for the younger teenage stepchild when he realizes that the new union

will mean major changes in his life. Ruby, for instance, was "all for" the marriage of her mother to Leonard, "until I realized it meant moving to another town, another school, and getting new friends." She fought the marriage, but it was too late (Ruby, 11/6/75, p. 1).

School age children have usually been socialized to adult values to the extent that they are able to carry off a grace period in a mannerly fashion. In addition, when a child starts to school, he turns his attention away from home: this is especially true for boys. A boy of six whose younger brother is making a fuss can adopt a wait-and-see attitude concerning his "new dad." While five-year-old Jim was saying, "Who's going to make me?" his brother Jules, seven, elected to cooperate with his stepfather (Fred, Jules & Jim, 6/7/75, p. 2).

Few pre-school children can allow live-in arrangements. There is seldom a grace period in this age group. Rupert, who was four when Adam moved in, reacted with typical resentment:

Rupert came back from visiting his father for the summer, and here was this man! I never believed that Freudian stuff, but before my eyes, Rupert went through it.

Like?

Well, he told Adam to get out of my bed, he told him he didn't want him around his mother, and when that didn't work, Adam told him he was sorry Rupert felt that way, but he was staying. Rupert started having nightmares, had diarrhea, cried a lot, all that stuff you read about. (Adelaide, 6/4/75, p. 3).

Stretching the limit of the age dimension is the toddler who cannot even tolerate a mother who has men in for the evening. Ethan was only three and a half when his mother started entertaining men. He sat between her and her date and said, "Mine " (Chloe, 3/4/76, p. 4.). There are exceptions. The "family baby" who has continued to enjoy a favored position in the family can tolerate a new man who also favors him in his treatment. Jack was such a child, and the extra ego support of being babied allowed him to accept Dale better than his school-age brother did. His mother said, "He was cute-- he was small, and everything he did was cute " (Gail, 3/11/76, p. 17).

A trial period runs concurrently with the grace period. The trial period is a time of tentative moves. A stepfather may make friending overtures to a child which, if rebuffed, will discourage further approaches of friending for some time. He attempts to make and enforce rules. Customarily, this is a period when close attention is paid to the stepfather's interaction with the child. The stepfather is in a relatively unequal power position with the mother concerning the child. She may grant disciplining power to him, but power granted, may be withdrawn (Blau, 1964). If the stepfather is granted a passing grade by the mother at the end of his trial period, the mother relaxes and becomes less watchful, even though at some level she considers the child her responsibility, and therefore never completely gives up her guardian role. Even the mother in the scapegoating,

child-left-out disciplining pattern draws the line somewhere. Disciplining patterns are described in detail in Chapter 4. The grace period is over, when after a trial of togetherness, the behavior of a member or members of the family group is deemed by another member to be undesirable, and serious efforts are made to change the behavior. The grace period is not a phase which occurs in every stepfamily. When the stepchild is at either end point of the age continuum, either pre-school or teenage, this phase is generally bypassed, and the family begins straight away to jockey for position.

Jockeying for Position

Unless the grace period has been bypassed, the social structural process of positioning follows the grace period. Most of the processes described in the present study occur during the jockeying for position phase of the shakedown cruise. The phase is described briefly here. However, it can be considered to continue through the first year or two of marriage in a stepfather family, and sometimes longer. The undermining conditions described in Part 3 of the present chapter give rise to jockeying. The processes described in two of the following chapters occur during the jockeying phase; for instance, decisions over who is allowed to make rules and who is to enforce the rules are structural decisions. The

friending and unfriending processes described in Chapter 6 influence the status of the individuals within the family group. During the jockeying for position phase, the family struggles in an interactive period wherein the members find out about each other and decide what kinds of structure and disciplining patterns they can live with. Often, one member is left out of the master plan. The jockeying period is a time of trial and error, demands and counter-demands, offers, counter-offers, and compromises. The period lasts from one-and-one-half to two years and comes to an end when a "settling down" is observed by the family members. Typical is this accounting:

After about two years, we all settled in. It took about two years, and then everybody sort of learned what made the other people mad--yes, it was about two years. But in some ways, those were the best years, because we all were intensely involved with one another, trying to understand one another--it was very intense. Now, we all go our own ways to a certain extent: Rupert cares most about his friends--I come second. Adam has his work, and I have mine. (Adelaide, 6/4/75, p. 5).

When positioning is settled, relative calm descends once again upon the household, and a homeostatic condition exists, to be interrupted now and again by the disequilibrium caused by a developmental crisis such as teenage in a child, or menopause in a spouse. Gregory (10/15/75) accounted for Carolyn leaving him after fifteen years as a "combination of womans' lib and menopause...she got an itch " (p. 4). Carolyn (10/24/75) for her part, talked of the good times and said the problems with the kids didn't happen until the teens. Status seeking is an important process in any group, but in the in-

timate situation of step-marriages, the process is especially disquieting. In her book, Remarriage A Study of Marriage, Jessie Bernard states:

One of the first questions that must be answered when a new member enters any group concerns his future status in the group. To whom is he superior? Who is superior to him? Horses in a pasture, small boys in a playground--members of a family of remarriage, the question is likely to be phrased in terms of identifying the intruder. Who is assimilating whom? Who actually, is the ingroup? Who belongs?

(1956, p. 215)

During the first one-and-one-half to two years of the shakedown cruise, most of the processes described in this study either take place, or the groundwork is laid down for them to occur. The amount of turmoil which happens during the shakedown cruise, and particularly during the phase of jockeying for position, is largely dependent upon conditions which exist in the step-home. Certain combinations of step-father, mother, and child fit together more easily than others. The meanings which the step-relationship have for the interactants can help or hinder the settling of the positioning in the family. Conditions which impede the easy settling of the shakedown cruise are outlined in Part 3.

PART 3

Undermining Conditions

The ease with which the members of a stepfather family settle their differences about discipline and move toward integration is based on their ties to the past and the acceptability of new situations, new ways of doing things, and new rules and rule-makers. The members of the family come to the marriage with ideas about what is normal in family life, based on their past experience with families. The spouse marrying for the first time has one family, his family of origin, upon which to base his ideas. The spouses in a stepfather family often come to the new situation from the family of the first marriage upon which they base their ideas of what is normal for a family. When the parents can't agree on what is normal behavior for children, they undermine each other's discipline. The child's tie to the mother is as legal as well as a moral one, and in arguments over childrearing, hers is the final legal and moral decision. Unless the mother gives in, it is finally the stepfather who is undermined. Having one's discipline undermined is a crushing experience. The outraged stepfather protests, and a battle ensues. The success of the stepfather experience is dependent upon how the parents, and the child, settle these differing ideas about child rearing. How they settle the differences depends on their sentimental order of childrearing.³ Ties

to the past and acceptability of the stepfather are largely based on the sentimental order of the participants. The three general conditions, sentimental order, ties, and acceptability, have been separated here for clarity.

Sentimental Order

A feeling of fitness and propriety, sentimental order is akin to value system, but goes beyond that concept. It is a notion of the proper order of things, "what feels right," and includes cultural and ethical viewpoints and a feeling of familiarity; only obliquely it includes moral outlooks. The search of parents for the perfect right way to rear their children is grounded in sentimental order. Sentimental order becomes paramount in modern households where work order and social order have dimmed in importance. The substance of household rules are those which regulate food, chores, time, space and safety. They are formed, enforced, and undermined on the basis of the sentimental order of the spouses, the "any boy should" or "any boy shouldn't" type of reasoning. Safety rules, those basic regulations which are held to be backed by well-planned, uniform standards for the protection of the child, are often colored by sentimental order. That which is considered dangerous in one home is okayed in another. Houses are kept clean to protect the health of the occupants, but the degree of safe cleanliness is encased in sentiment. Health practices are largely a sentimental matter.

In the same house where the child is cautioned not to fill up on chozzerai before a meal, the mother serves cracklings as cocktail snacks before a dinner party. The enforcement of safety rules follows what seems right to parents. A room may be made safe for a small child by removing harmful objects, but some parents prefer to punish the child who gets close to danger to "teach him what is harmful." Enforcement techniques are not based on research or educational theory. Some parents do not observe the rules of trial and error, but continue to use enforcement techniques which are not getting the job done, because of a sentimental adherence to consistency, "Spanking doesn't seem to be working--nothing works with Jack....but you have to be consistent, the others got spanked " (Dale & Gail, 3/11/76, p. 9.). Child guidance books do not agree on rule enforcement techniques: some okay spanking used judiciously, others advise parents to stay away from corporal punishment.⁴ When parents have read child guidance books, their sentimental order becomes legitimated. If the mother reads a book which advocates the participation of the child in the establishment of rules, and the stepfather adheres to a book which decrees the parents as authority, with the spouses partners in an enforcement front, then the parents have not only widely divergent views, but they can literally throw the book at each other.

Parents form their ideas about the right way of child-rearing by watching their own parents. They develop beliefs about childrearing and react instinctively, based on these

beliefs. One of their beliefs may be that they plan child-rearing activities, but in truth, an interaction with a child, often just comes out. Lotty, an avowed "hip feminist" shocked herself with an angry scream at her daughter, "Young lady, if you don't behave yourself..." (Lotty, 12/20/75, p. 1).

Thomas Gordon explains:

...parents today rely almost universally on the same methods of raising children and dealing with problems in their families that were used by their own parents, by their parents' parents, by their grandparents' parents. Unlike all other institutions of society, the parent-child relationship seems to have remained unchanged. Parents depend on methods used two thousand years ago.

(1970, p. 4)

Any two parents have trouble agreeing on the sentimental order of their discipline: "The chances of spouses doing at least some things differently from one another are just about 100 percent, as neither was brought up the same way " (Satir, 1972, p. 129). In stepfather families, all persons involved have their own sentimental order, or right way of doing things. The issues can be over small matters, such as bouncing a ball in the house. "You know it isn't right," the answer to which is, "He's not hurting anything." Brenda and Bruno were having trouble over Randy. Mother and stepfather had a sentimental view or order, and so did Randy:

Bruno says I don't see that Randy finishes his jobs, that he does them half way, and I say that that's right, the way he's doing his jobs is ok with me--it's good enough. You see, he'll make up for not completing a job by doing something like the dishes which isn't his assigned duty--it's his way of complying, and still retaining some autonomy. Bruno can't accept that. (Brenda, 5/5/76, p. 2).

Bruno believed in thorough work. Brenda believed the job being done was sufficient, and Randy had his own idea of how to manage: a half-finished job patched up by another job.

When a stepfather attempts to undermine the power base of the mother, and change the pre-existing disciplinary pattern, sentimental order becomes the rationale for undermining on a social structural level--the making of rules for structure, and whom is allowed to be rule-maker. "You should let me make the rules because a child needs a father's hand." It is also the rationale on a social-psychological process level, that of rule-making. "We should make this rule because it's not right to bounce a ball in the house." It is also the basis for undermining the underminer; that is to say, for the mother to undermine the stepfather's attempt to gain a piece of the action, "They're my kids, my responsibility, and I want them to have the freedom of ball-bouncing in the house; I don't want them inhibited." Children grow and thrive in a variety of situations with vastly different house rules. The example of ball-bouncing has been used, because while not morally wrong or dangerous, it could be annoying in the extreme to an adult who knows from past experience that in-house ball-bouncing is wrong, and who, if pressed, could make a fair case for potential dangers in the activity. "What if that ball bounced up and hit the chandelier--a piece of glass could fall down and put somebody's eye out!"

When undermining is based on another condition, the

attack is grounded in sentimental order. The rationale given for change is that it would be only right. Sentimental order may not be the salient undermining condition in stepfather families, but it is called to use most frequently because it is the cause and solution of most arguments over discipline. Conflict begins and is resolved on the same basis. The argument arises over what is right, and the couple ends the argument to avoid being overheard, to compromise, to present an enforcement front, all of which are sentimental reasons to suspend hostilities.

Ties

Sentimental order is a tie to a past way of doing things. Other ties undermine the smooth integration of the step-home and the acceptance of the stepfather as child manager. They may be ties to a past relationship, or they may be ties to a role. Some ties are mythical, and some are legal. The acceptability of the stepfather as full-management partner is based on the sentimental meaning of the ties to the interactants.

Legal Ties. The power structure in stepfather families is weighted on the side of the mother. "When divorce involves children, nine times out of ten, physical custody of the children is awarded to the mother." (Walters, 1976).

Very few stepfathers adopt the children; therefore, it is the mother who decides legal matters concerning the children. (With an assist from the biological father.) A mother also has a moral obligation to be responsible for her child. In the final analysis, true power over the child is the province of the biological mother. Equalizing the mother's power is part of the politics of the family (Adams, 1973).

Maternal Ties: The Package. When a man marries a woman with a child, it is a package deal: if he wants the woman, he must accept the child. The package is often tightly wrapped. Mother and child who have not formed an alliance during the first union, tend to grow closer together during the time between marriages, for even the child who did not go with the favored parent will have lost the physical presence of a father, and realize the importance of holding on to the remaining parent:

If one-half of his stable world can so easily disappear, what will prevent the other half from vanishing? Who will be there tomorrow to protect and care for him? According to the logic of childhood, these are perfectly logical fears.

(Krantzler, 1973, p. 179)

Protective Ties: Traumatized Child, Parental Guilt.

The mother or father who has watched a child go through the agonies of divorce feels a desire to protect the child from further trauma. Mothers are ambivalent about allowing a

new father to take over, and fathers who have left a biological child behind, feel guilty over spending time with another child. Children find it difficult to make changes, and if the new marriage means moving, the children themselves agree that they are having a hard time. A woman who falls in love with a man whose sentimental order dictates a different method of childrearing from that which she considers fitting and proper is in a dilemma about the fair thing to do for husband and child. She fears making the wrong choice, and damaging the child or rendering the marriage:

I really didn't know what to do. I really dug this guy, and I didn't want to alienate him, and yet, I didn't want Rupert treated unfairly. It was a matter of where should my loyalty be?

(Adelaide, 6/4/75, p. 4).

Fathers, too, who have left a child behind are uneasy about giving a stepchild what a biological child may lack: this can extend to attention, goods, or affection. Fathers whose children visit on weekends are reluctant to extend the discipline of the house to the part-time members, "because they don't have the advantages." (Emery, 6/5/76, p. 4). The outcome of such favoring can result in an outcry from the live-in children: "How come we get spanked and they don't?" (Ivan, 3/11/76, p. 6). Protectiveness on the part of a biological parent works against integration. Attempts at equal treatment for all are undermined, and the outcome is resentment or subversion. Concern over the traumatized child can extend to more distant family. A grandmother, for instance, whose attitude of "poor child" leads to preferential treat-

ment. Grandmothers may attempt to make it up to the "poor little boy with no father," allowing behaviors in a child to which a stepfather takes exception. "It was mostly your mother--she treated him like a baby" (Emery, 6/5/75, p. 3).

Divorce and remarriage do indeed take their toll from a child. Children may not discuss their reactions with their parents, but still share in feeling guilt over the divorce:

I know of no child of divorce who has not felt that he or she was somehow responsible for the break-up, even though this belief may never be directly expressed. If a child at some point has wished his mother or father dead or absent (and what child has not?) he may draw the conclusion from the divorce--illogical to adults, but terribly compelling to him--that the actual departure is the direct consequence of his wish.
(Krantzler, 1973, p. 181).

Child guidance books advise special treatment for difficult periods in a child's life:

Leeway for hard times. Special stress situations --accidents, illness, moving into a new neighborhood, separation from friends, death or divorce in the family--call for additional leeway. We grant it because of our appreciation of hard times and new adjustments.

(Ginott, 1965, pp. 114-115).

In the present study, children of divorce and remarriage often voiced objections to new schools, friends, and homes. Milo (12/11/75) whose mother had married three times, said at first that he had not been too much bothered by his life changes:

According to the books, it's supposed to be very hard on a kid.

Well, my life just sort of flows along (smile).

What if your mother should get another divorce?

(Milo showed a little of his hardship, for tears came to his eyes). Well, in the first place, I don't think that could ever happen...

It really hasn't been all that easy then?

No.

What was the worst part of it?

Like you said, all the changes. Like at one point I changed schools four times in a few months. (p. 5).

Another stepchild, Rose (11/11/75), said of the house of her stepfather into which she had moved, "I hated this house " (p. 3). Forrest (10/27/75, p. 2) said that as a fatherless child he feared his mother might marry a man who had a job in another city, and the family might be forced to move. He had seen the suffering of "new kids in school" and he didn't want to be in that place.

Parents watching a child grieve for lost friends, or a departed parent, have difficulty assuming a relaxed attitude about discipline. Children and parents often have ties to past relationships.

Biological Ties: Ties to the "Other." Children are tied to the "other" (biological) father; stepfathers are tied to their "own" children. The belief that blood is "thicker than water" is widespread (even though spouses are not blood relatives). These biological ties can undermine the integration of the new relationship, and make discipline unacceptable either because of the manner in which it is presented, or because of the meaning for the interactants of the manner, or

the discipline.

Biological fathers, even when they visit seldom or not at all, leave behind an impression. "Anyone who has ever been part of a family leaves a definite impact " (Satir, 1972, p. 144). The departed cannot be completely ignored. Being careful not to talk about the "ghost" father, is a way of acknowledging him. The presence of the biological father is one reason stepchildren are not adopted: the first father would object.⁵ Another reason children are not adopted is a financial one. Most biological fathers contribute to the support of their children, and even the family in the \$120,000 house expects the father to be responsible for the child in this way. In families where the stepfather has his own biological children to support, payments received for his stepchildren are passed on to his ex-wife in the form of child support for his child. The ghost walks through two families.

In the present study, most families accepted the "other" parent as a necessary evil, but he was not considered exceptionally problematic. Father and child are usually encouraged to maintain a friendly relationship. "I want him to, because the books say that's good " (Adelaide, 6/4/75, p. 4). There was no correlation in this study between availability of biological fathers and nonavailability in integrative discipline. The child whose father rarely visited spoke lovingly of the missing parent, but a child whose father was deceased was seen as less than perfect by his child. Dorothy, a widow, maintained that Rose's father never spanked her, but Rose

corrected her mother and maintained that it had happened several times (11/11/75, p. 5). The child often has fantasies of running off to a missing parent, but realizes, in a practical way, that this wouldn't work out. Viola (12/4/75, p. 12) said, "You just have to keep the houses separate." The attitude of most stepfather families was that children learn different rules at school and manage that, and weekends with different rules didn't make that much difference.

"Other" fathers understandably object to an outward show of displacement. Renee's father "looked sad" when she told him Earnest, her stepfather, wanted to adopt her, and that she thought it was a good idea (9/29/75, p. 7). Ivan's father objected to Ivan's use of paternal address for his stepfather, resulting in this bizarre departure statement, "Bye, Dad. Uh, I mean, bye, Mr. O'Faolain " (Ivan, 3/11/76, p. 12).

Children from the stepfather's past make reappearances. When the stepfather's children were weekend guests, the spouses interviewed were uniformly critical of the life-style and discipline in the "other" family. In the same vein, even if they said the biological father was "okay," there were some words of criticism during the interview. But in most integrated families, the presence of another father was not seen as particularly threatening or undermining. The boundaries of the family were well enough established to allow for free access. Children who are integrated into the family of their stepfather can take the remarriage of the "other," the biological father, in stride. Kent (11/20/75) said, "I have four par-

ents " (p. 4). Bohannan (1975) suggests that the complicated network in stepfather families may adversely affect the mental health of stepchildren:

The core unit with which the members of the group have to deal is made up of a social quadrad (instead of a triad): father, stepfather, mother and child...even when all parties behave well, this complication may create difficulties. (p. 5).

In the present study, the most often mentioned problem which emerged from the complicated network was a scheduling one. Dale and Gail (3/11/76) each had a former spouse who married a person with children, making for a complicated visiting schedule. Not only the discipline of the house, but a whole life structure of several households had to be changed to accommodate variations in visiting. This undermining condition was avoided by instituting a firm policy of no-changes-or-you-miss-your-turn.

One of the most persistent and widespread undermining conditions is the belief that a stepfather cannot love a stepchild as he would a biological child. A critical issue in disciplining patterns, i.e., who is allowed to make and enforce rules, depends on the amount of affection the stepfather seems to hold for the child. The belief that a stepfather cannot love a child as much as a biological father could is often held by the stepfather as well as the mother. Some stepfathers form close, friendly relationships with stepchildren, but a range of behaviors is possible, and some stepfathers do show favoritism for a biological child, or use the "other" child as a standard for behavior. Some

stepfathers who have no children of their own, predict that there would be a difference in treatment if they had their own child. One stepfather said he was "not sure about having another child" because he was afraid he might compare the two children, one stepchild, one biological, and that he might favor his own (Roy, 11/6/75, p. 4). George, a grown stepchild, remembers the attitude of his stepfather. "If anything, I respect my (step) father for what he did. Never had kids of his own so as not to create favoritism." (10/15/75). Gregory (10/15/75), a stepfather, kept repeating throughout the interview, "blood is thicker than water," and admitted that there was a difference in his attitude. Other stepfathers denied that there was a difference, but it was perceived by the stepchild. Two grown stepchildren told similar stories. Shelly remembered that although her mother married when Shelly was under two, she always knew by his aloof attitude that Kalus was her stepfather. "That was real clear " (Shelly, 7/13/75, p. 3). Another stepdaughter recalled:

My stepfather always tried to pretend that he liked, loved me the same as the children he and my mother had together. It was clear to me that he preferred his own children, but he would never admit it. That caused me a lot of trouble in life; I would have gotten along a lot better if only he had been open about his preferences. (Eleanor, 3/10/76, p. 1).

Even though parents believe "blood is thicker," previous parenting experience is seen as an advantage by most stepfather couples, a wearing off of "rough edges." Disadvantages include a standard of behavior with the biological

child as criteria. The stepfather may expect the child to have similar patterns of behavior--those which are in tune with the stepparent's personal biography. The stepfather may have a platonic form for child behavior, which is that of his own child. (A sentimental order of child behavior.) That part of the personal biography which includes parenting may serve as an undermining condition if the stepfather expects to move from one relationship with his own child to a similar relationship with another child who has his own personal biography, and may have a platonic form for father behavior. (A sentimental order of father behavior.) The child may expect certain actions from a person who is a father, and may have difficulty accustoming himself to another style of parenting. For example, the child not used to the heart-to-heart talk, or the expression of feelings, may be turned off by such tactics and in turn may turn off the stepparent.

When his and hers children live together, parents tend to play favorites with their own child, but usually rationalize their actions on the basis of properties of the situation. A father may claim that differential disciplining is justifiable on the basis of age, sex, or proximity. When a male stepchild hit a stepsister, he was punished, although a full sibling (male) was not (Ollie, 9/23/75, p. 1). An older stepchild committed the same sin as a biological child, and was punished, while the biological child got off scott free. The reason given was that the stepchild was older,

and should have known better (Brenda, 5/5/76, p. 1).

A stepfather who is in tune with his own child, may tune out behaviors, such as bouncing a ball in the house, while at the same time tuning in to the same behavior in a stepchild, and object to it. The noise of a stepchild is louder. The stepfather may, on the other hand, tune out desirable behavior in a stepchild if the pattern is not one with which he is in tune. Some stepfathers are openly hostile toward a stepchild and affectionate toward a biological child. Rare was the stepfather who was always hostile to a stepchild, but in one home, the stepfather rarely spoke to his stepchildren, but spoke in glowing tones of his own daughter. "She's a darn good kid," said Floyd (7/12/75, p. 4) about the daughter he had left behind. A daughter with whom he had had an exceptionally close talk-over-troubles-with relationship. Carolyn said that her husband was especially hostile to his stepson who was the same age as his own son, that he disattended his son's faults, blew up at the stepson's trespasses out of proportion (Carolyn, 10/24/75, p. 2). Gregory, the stepfather, recalled that his stepson was "antipathetic," that the lad took one look at his stepfather and decided that he didn't like what he saw (10/15/75, p. 3).

The hard evidence that blood is thicker than water acts as an undermining condition to integrative discipline. Errol summed it up. "I don't think most men care that much about children not their own " (9/11/75, p. 5).

Untying: Teenage Years. Teenagers pose a special problem in remarriage. The problem is a shared one in that the budding adult feels imposed upon by paternalistic behavior from a stepparent, and a new parent may be at a loss attempting to evoke sanctions against the behavior of a towering adolescent. The teenager engaged in the task of developing his identity, and gaining independence, finds new rules out of synch with the direction his life is taking. Erick Erickson (1968) explains this developmental process:

But in youth the tables of childhood dependence begin slowly to turn: no longer is it merely for the old to teach the young the meaning of life. It is the young who, by their responses and actions, tell the old whether life as represented to them has vital promise, and it is the young who carry in them the power to confirm those who confirm them, to renew and regenerate, to disavow what is rotten, to reform, to rebel.
(p. 258).

In the same family where the stepfather is welcomed as a "dad" for a school-age child, a teenager, independent and ready to be off to college, may react to disciplinary attempts rebelliously. "I just won't take it!" (Lorraine, 1/15/76, p. 4), or may shrug off a new father's wishes: "I just never paid any attention to him." (Shelley, 7/13/75, p. 8).

By virtue of size, increased mobility, and courage, teenagers are difficult to control through coercion. Techniques which will effectively restrain a pre-school child don't work with the near-adult. Thomas Gordon says the rebellion in the teenager is a rebellion against the power which the parents have exerted over him;

He is no longer controlled by his parents' rewards because he does not need them so much; and he is immune to threats of punishment because there is little they can do to give him pain or strong discomfort. (1970, p. 172).

The acceptability of the rule depends on the source of the rule and the way in which the rule is processed. The mother and stepfather who have formed the ties of marriage sometimes expect the children to find new rules, and a new maker of rules, acceptable, and do not take into account that the child does not share their enthusiasm for the new order of things. In the following section, acceptabilities of the rule and rule-maker are discussed.

Acceptabilities

Mythical Ties: The Myth of Similar Backgrounds. Shared discipline can be acceptable to the spouses, and not easily tolerated by the child. Parents in stepfather families sometimes speak of easing into a relationship because the spouses come from similar backgrounds. The stance is maintained even when the children engage in problematic behavior such as window-smashing, house-burning, knife fights, blankness and absent-mindedness, all reported by "similar background" couples in this study. The spousal position is due to a condition which I call the myth of similar backgrounds.

Similar backgrounds in stepfather families constitutes a myth. The spousal pair may share a common cultural back-

ground of, say, Irish Catholicism, but a stepfather family involves the background of more than two people. The child has shared a part of his life with a father who is generally of a different stripe: perhaps a different religion, a different social class, a different personality. Many first spouses are described as "irresponsible." Additional people make up the background of remarriage. The parents of the spouses, for example, who often had not divorced. Therefore, the spouses may have some cultural similarities in their past, but the past of the stepchild is a different matter. The spouses never had themselves for mother and stepfather, nor did they have the ex-husband for a father. The sameness in their past may make the adjustment easier for the spouses, but to push the sameness, to force it, when it is not there, to impose it on children, "we are the same" comes dangerously close to the concept Wynne, Ryckoff, Day and Hirsh (1958) named pseudomutuality. In this dynamic, the members of a family become locked into a group identity, and individual differences are denied. The undermining quality of the similar background myth is evident in the problematic behavior of the children in such homes in this study. The myth of similar background might be restated as, pretending there is no problem is part of the problem.

The Social Father. The surrogate father who lives with a child over the years can be more influential than a biologi-

cal father in shaping the child's character. Close ties are formed which match or exceed those in a biological relationship. Efforts to force the relationship, however, are usually unsuccessful.

Instances of stepchildren and stepfathers identifying one with the other occur in stepfather families. In integrated homes, the stepchild begins to adopt habits and character traits from the stepfather. Where there is insufficient friending behavior, the identification between the steps may be slow in coming or fail to appear. Step-identification is not the same as the kind of engrossment behavior described by Greenberg (1974) which fathers experience with their newborns, or that which allows a young woman to develop "Maternal Role Identity" through close association with her baby (Highley, 1967). Rather, it is an identification of friend-cum-father-figure. Identification in stepfather-child relationships emerges more easily where the individuals involved do not expect a child to be "just like," or a stepfather to be "just like." This kind of role expectation can cloud the issue and the vision of the participants. (Identification and modeling is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.)

The social father learns to appreciate the child for himself. One stepfather in the present study said that his stepdaughter was much easier to handle than his four sons had been (Karl, 11/11/75, p. 4). Other stepfathers spoke of the "close feeling" they had for a stepchild. Boris (1/15/76) said, "I know Jenny better than my son, I raised her " (p. 1.).

In light of the conditions which exist to undermine integration and disciplinary efforts in stepfather homes, the outcome for satisfactory formation of integrative discipline appears dim. However, at the end of the shakedown cruise, most stepfather homes achieve some measure of integration, and more or less agree on discipline. They have tabled open conflict over the matter, and have bright hopes of managing their remaining childrearing years with success. The undermining conditions have been described in some detail here, and they will be referred to throughout this work. The conditions which tend to undermine the integration of the stepfather family, and the stepfather's position as child-manager--particularly the sentimental order of the interactants--can be thought of as the seeds of conflict which make the shakedown cruise stormy.

Summary

Parents in stepfather homes identify a one-and-one-half to two-year period in which they become acquainted with each other and learn to live in cohabitation before things "settle down." This period, named the shakedown cruise, can be divided into two phases; the grace period, and the period of jockeying-for-position. The grace period is the first few months or weeks of the marriage when everyone in the family is polite, and misconduct is overlooked. The grace period

does not usually occur with pre-school children, and may not with teenagers. Jockeying-for-position is characterized by attempts at exchanges of power, rule-making and rule-enforcing attempts, and undermining. At the end of the shakedown cruise, jockeying-for-position has abated somewhat, and rule-maker-enforcer patterns are established.

Discipline is defined as teaching the young to behave in ways approved of by their elders. Different ideas about what is proper and what "feels right;" i.e., the sentimental order of the interactants, cause most of the difficulties when the stepfather attempts to take over as full partner with child-management duties. Mother, child, and stepfather have ties to past relationships, and old ways of doing things, which make the new merger of mother and stepfather as partners in child management difficult.

Becoming an integrated family while managing the disciplining of children is the problem which most concerns partners in stepfather homes. These two goals, discipline and integration, are attainable through a process I have named integrative discipline. Three sub-processes make up integrative discipline: (1) Rule-making and rule-enforcing; (2) friending, actions by the stepfather which allow the child to view him as a person of value; and (3) integrative undermining, a form of undermining the power base of the mother by the stepfather which is acceptable to mother and child.

In the following chapter, the interactants can be thought of as still within the jockeying-for-position phase of the shakedown cruise, excepting where indicated otherwise. Rule-making and rule-enforcing processes; disintegrative undermining and rule-maker-enforcer patterns are discussed.

Footnotes

1. I have given new names to all the participants in this study. In most cases, I tried to suggest the original name. For instance, if a man had a Scotch name, I gave him a different Scotch name. However, often I chose a name because it suited my fancy.
2. The Womens' Movement has made wives more conscious of the loss of identity in giving up one's maiden name. Hence, the increased popularity of the use of double names for professional women, or the retention of the maiden name.
3. Glaser and Strauss have used the concept of sentimental order to describe what is fitting and proper on a hospital ward in Awareness of Dying (1969, p. 226 and elsewhere) in connection with dying patients and the nurse's composure, according to the sentimental order of the ward. In Status Passage (1971) they deal with the number of events which will properly fit into a given space of time. "By sentimental order we mean that people involved in the passage will have feelings that things will happen according to temporal expectations." (p. 43). The concept fits other situations, such as here, step-parent families' view of what is fitting and proper for family conduct.
4. In the matter of corporal punishment, the advice differs from book-to-book. Some authors warn against spanking: Briggs (1975), Fraiberg (1959), Ginott (1965), Gordon (1970). Many others advise that a mild spanking is harmless, and may be helpful: Biller (1974), Chess, Alexander & Birch (1965), Dodson (1974). Some authors insist that a firm stand is required, while others are just as certain that a democratic method is the only one with long-term benefits. One author advises parents to "seek divine assistance." (Dobson, 1970, p. 221).
5. Spock (1962) suggested that adoption as an attempt to equalize the power structure in step-homes is apt to fail.

Chapter 4

RULE-MAKING AND RULE-ENFORCING: WHO RULES THE ROOST?

When a man marries a woman with a child, he becomes a marriage partner. He does not assume full child management duties, because mother and child are a going concern with their own way of doing things, and they resist change. If the mother attempts to award full partnership status to the stepfather regarding the child, and form with him a united enforcement front, the child resists. If the mother attempts to keep the stepfather out of child management, he protests. The preceding chapter covers some of the blocks to integration of the family. Special attention is given to the old ties of family members and to sentimental order, which serve as undermining conditions to the acceptance of new rules. Part 1 of this chapter outlines the stepfather's attempt to gain full partnership in the marriage by making new rules. If he moves slowly, his effort is integrative. If he moves too quickly to assume power, the result is disintegrative. When the mother and child resist new rules by the new man on the scene, the stepfather, he makes counter-moves to gain control. In extreme cases, he gives up altogether, and the marriage disintegrates. The struggle for power is discussed in the section on discipline for adults. The spouses try to make their rules stick by using various

enforcement techniques on each other. Enforcement is included in this section on rule-making for adults for the sake of clarity. The last section of Part 1 contains the sources and substance of the rules. As the substantive areas are discussed, some description is included of the rules for enforcement. Mothers, in the beginning, resist rules about chores, but in time permit them. However, mothers make a rule against using food restriction as an enforcement technique.

Part 2 is concerned with rule-enforcing activity. Attempts by the stepfather to enforce rules engenders greater resistance than rule-making. In some families, the stepfather is allowed to make rules, but he is not allowed to enforce them. The family patterns of making and enforcing rules is discussed in Part 3. There are five maker-enforcer patterns, one integrated pattern, and four "left-out" patterns where one family member is left out of the action. The patterns are: (1) integrated, where nobody is left out; (2) stepfather left out, or not-my-kid; (3) mother left out, or anything-you-say-dear; (4) stepfather in charge, or child-left-out, and (5) everyone left out, or chaos.

Earlier in Chapter 3, the first two years of marriage called the shakedown cruise is discussed. During the shakedown cruise, family members jockey-for-position, as they work out who will be full partners with child management privileges, and who will not. The present chapter describes

the processes in which the family members are engaged during the first two years before they "settle in." The processes of rule-making, rule-enforcing, and undermining, lead to the maker-enforcer patterns described in Part 3 of this chapter. The settling in is not permanent, however, because the patterns change in the direction of integration or disintegration.

PART 1

RULE-MAKING

In any family, in order for a suggested rule by one partner to become a de facto regulation, there must be agreement by the other partner that he will not oppose the rule. In intact families, each parent has an equal biological right to insist that his rule suggestion becomes a regulation. (This is not to say that in intact families the parents avail themselves of that right.) The stepfather, however, has no such biological right. At the beginning of the union of stepfather and mother, the mother is the autocratic maker-of-rules concerning the child. If the stepfather wants management privileges, he must gain the permission of the mother and the cooperation of the child.

Typically, the stepfather asks the mother if she "wants help" with the discipline of the child. In the present study, mothers' responses to the offer of help ranged from total rejection to total acceptance. The majority of mothers, however, responded to the offer with a qualified yes, a we'll-see-how-it-goes attitude. The situation is ripe for the mother to undermine rule-making attempts by the stepfather, because she must agree on the stepfather's right to suggest rules as well as the substance of each rule. The first attempts by the stepfather to make and enforce rules occur during the first weeks or months of the marriage or courtship. This is the trial period, which is described in the previous chapter. How things go during the trial period, sets the tone for family interaction.

Integrative Moves

Timing is critical. When the stepfather moves slowly, and takes care to demonstrate to mother and child that he is acting in the best interests of the child, his attempts to gain management privileges are successful. In the family of Marie and Ed, the trial of the stepfather occurred before the marriage. Marie watched Ed to see if he was acting as a friend to her son, Kent. Marie said there were no "before rules" regarding discipline, but she observed the interaction

between Ed and Kent before the marriage--her advice to others was to do this very carefully (Marie, 11/20/75, p. 6).

Another family had a live-in trial. When they were considering marriage, Virginia and her daughter, Essie, lived with the prospective stepfather, Gene, for a week on two separate occasions to "see how it worked out." Gene said they got on well together, and Virginia said, "I felt right about it " (11/5/75, p. 2). In rare cases the stepfather exercises his trial maneuvers so successfully that at a later time, the mother forgets that a judgment was necessary. This was so with the stepfather, Earnest, his wife Evelyn and Evelyn's daughter, Renee. Earnest began to make suggestions very slowly. He said, "I was really unsure of myself." The family became integrated with so little trauma, that they found it difficult to recall how integration was accomplished. In the instances above, the stepfather was able to share in ruling the roost, because he moved with caution, demonstrated that he was a friend to the child, and allowed the mother to lower her defenses. This was a move toward integration. The stepfather was granted a conditional partnership: the conditions stipulated that future performance equal that of the trial period.

Disintegrative Undermining

If the stepfather's attempt to undermine the mother's autocratic position doesn't feel right to her, if it offends her sentimental order of discipline, she puts up her defenses. This is a move toward disintegration because they take sides. If the disagreement is minor, resistance is minimal. Limits may be based on the substance of a particular rule. Dorothy told me that when her new husband, Karl, started making rules, "I liked it, Rose needed managing." But the couple did have some disputes, and bedtime was one. Rose was accustomed to going to bed at 10, and Karl said she should be in bed by 7. Dorothy disagreed, and they settled on 8 (Dorothy, 11/11/75, p. 4). In the example above, the mother and stepfather compromised on a middle course. If the stepfather moves too quickly, and adds harsh enforcement of his new rules, the mother puts up her guard, and entire rule-making privileges are revoked. Roy, who didn't realize that his disciplining was on trial, found out when the verdict was in. Roy (11/6/75) said that when he first moved in with Peggy and her son, Claude, he thought that he fell naturally into the role of "father." When Claude displeased him, Roy banished the boy, or did whatever he thought was appropriate. After a month, Peggy, who had felt that he was being entirely too strict and harsh, exploded. Roy said:

That first fight was almost our last! I mean, I thought I was doin' pretty good, you know, and then, whew, I mean, the roof fell in. You know, whew, it was heavy! (p. 3).

Roy's bid to gain management privileges failed. His effort to share in discipline was undermined by the mother. This is an example of disintegrative undermining, because the mother undermined her marriage partner and he did not become a full child management partner, but instead became odd man out.

Discipline for Adults. Making and enforcing rules extends to the spousal relationship; rules there are also made and enforced. Forceful discipline for adults can undermine the marriage itself. No stepfather in the present study meekly accepted a secondary role in childrearing. Withdrawal of disciplinary privileges by the mother evoked counter-strategies on the part of the stepfather; he attempted to enforce full-partnership rule-making rules. Enforcement techniques for adults took the form of argument, yelling, and non-verbal messages of disapproval such as neglect of duties, absenting, withholding of favors or physical combat. Klaus's strategy for enforcement of his rules was relatively mild. "Klaus's way of letting his wants be known was either to remain silent and look displeased, or to be sarcastic " (Jessica, 7/7/75, p. 5). Fernand attempted to take over management of his stepchildren by ignoring

the agreement he had made with Georgia before the marriage-- that he would not interfere. Georgia (10/21/76) said that she told Fernand that "the boys were mine, and I would be responsible for them." She told Fernand that if he wanted to make rules, she would sit down with him and discuss it beforehand, and that she did not want him to issue "random" orders. Fernand agreed to this, but once the couple was married, it was only a short time before he started giving orders. Georgia resisted. At first she encouraged him to sit down with her and map out rules, but he found that "emasculatation " (p. 2). When the stepfather countered the mother's withdrawal of privileges with enforcement strategies, she reacted with strategies in kind. When Fernand attempted to take over, Georgia "fought him," and the conflict escalated. According to Georgia, in his struggle for power, Fernand acted out by drinking and by behaving in a variety of bizarre ways. It became clear, she said, that he was an "alcoholic," and Georgia believed that he was a "psychotic" as well. Fernand got "paranoid" and "bought guns." He shot up some stores in Fremont, and he once threatened her with a gun. Finally she left (10/21/75, p. 3). Fernand attempted to get his own way, and when Georgia resisted, he used the enforcement techniques of drinking, acting mad, and absenting. Georgia used the strategy of absenting herself from the marriage. Discipline for adults resulted in an extreme example of disintegrative undermining.

The severity of the conflict, and the biography of the contestants, determine adult enforcement techniques. Georgia and Fernand, in the example above, began by using the most common strategy, argument. As the battle escalated, the strategies became more forceful, but were in keeping with the biography of both. Fernand had been a drinker before the marriage, and Georgia had learned to hold the line in her first marriage. Drinking in bars, a form of absenting, was used by other stepfathers: those who had attempted to solve other social problems using the same method. Floyd (7/17/75), for example, had spent a lot of time in bars during his first marriage, and in his hometown, the bar was the social center. Professional and businessmen use another form of absenting. They have "responsibilities" which require them to be elsewhere. The excuse of a "sick patient" or a "big deal" sounds valid, and serves the purpose of keeping the stepfather away from a home where the children's conduct suits the mother but not the stepfather. The man with no children of his own has the added leverage of being able to absent himself more easily: he can just take off.

Some parents fight through their children. One father with children who visited, attempted to force them into the scene like a battering ram. Errol (9/11/75) had two children from a previous marriage. His new wife, Rhoda, had a seven-year-old daughter, Carla, and soon gave birth to the child she and Errol had conceived, Thad. Errol insisted that his children from the previous marriage be included in all the

outings, and the more Rhoda attempted to plan some time with just Thad, Carla and Errol (the new family), the more insistent Errol became that the others be included (p. 4). Few families can withstand conflict so severe that children are used as weapons. Something has to give and in this case it was the marriage. Errol and Rhoda were divorced in less than a year.

Undermining Child.

Observe the drift of words descending from adult to child--the fall of personal questions, observations, unnecessary instructions. Before long the listener seems blanketed. He must hear the voice as authority muffled, a hum through snow. The tone has changed--it may be coaxing, even plaintive--but the words have barely altered. They still claim the ancient right-of-way through a young life.

(Gallant, 1976, p. 38).

Children, too, engage in undermining activity. When the child reacts to the stepfather's rule in such a way that his behavior causes the mother to defend the child, it is an example of disintegrative undermining, because it divides the stepfather from the maternal-child package. Most adults can remember techniques they used to undermine the rules of their parents. Children develop skill in the art of gaining privileges through devious means. Some examples of childish undermining are the following: The loosely-transmitted message is popular. "See what your

mother says about your going" translates to, "Dad said it was okay with him if it's okay with you." Poor memory is another undermining of rules used by children, as is inattention. "Oh, I didn't hear you," delivered in an innocent tone, can be effective. However, if used too often, it promotes a trip to the ear doctor. More involved methods are intended to evoke guilt in the parent, and include crying, tragic visage, and waiting until after punishment to prove innocence. Other methods are sulking, sighing, moping, and poor grades. The techniques listed above are examples from my personal childhood. They are tricks I used as a child to undermine my parents' interference in my life, and I have recalled them here because it was clear to me at the time that I was using these techniques to get my own right-of-way. I suggest that stepchildren are often aware of the undermining quality of their activity. Some of the stepchildren interviewed alone, admitted as much. Children in the present study did not welcome new rules issued by a stepfather. The methods used to undermine rules ranged from a benign, "Do I have to?" (Joey, 6/5/75, p. 6) to outright defiance, "Who's going to make me?" (Jim, 6/7/75, p. 2). Other children whined (Carla, 9/11/75, p. 1). Shelly stayed out of her stepfather's way (7/13/75, p. 14) and Forrest, nineteen when his stepfather moved in, employed social distance. Forrest told me that he made no special effort to get close to his stepfather, because the way things were, he had a measure of privacy--he lived there, but he wished to be his own man, and he said to get too close

would carry with it some responsibility to participate in family life (Forrest, 10/27/75, p. 3). Renee said she felt "put down" (9/29/75, p. 6) and George, grown now, remembers that, "I resented my stepfather. After all, my feeling was something like, who are you?" In his own words, he became a "behavior problem " (George, 10/15/75, p. 2). The child's reaction may be unconscious undermining, but the effect of his behavior can undermine the stepfather's position as rule-maker. The reason Roy lost his disciplinary privileges, according to his wife, Peggy, was that she noticed that her child's behavior was deteriorating under Roy's influence:

Roy started complaining about Claude's behavior, and I started to notice that Claude was doing things he had never done before. I mean, he was yelling a lot, and talking really loud, he was really active, and he was crying more. He didn't want to go to bed anymore. Well, I thought, wait a minute, what's going on here? So then I put my foot down.
(Peggy, 11/6/75, p. 4).

The child's reaction to the stepfather caused the mother to adopt a "hands off" attitude. The net result of the child's undermining of the rules was a move toward disintegration.

Sources and Substance of the Rules

The substance of rules for child behavior are intertwined with the source of the rules. The substance of safety

rules, for example, varies according to the age of the child. A toddler must be kept out of the street, the fire, and the Clorox, while a teenager must be kept out of the car, bad company, and drugs. Other substantive areas of space, work, time, food and deportment, vary according to the sex of the rule-maker. The sentimental order of men does not always agree with that of women. Rules, then, must be age-appropriate, and fit the sense of proper order of all concerned. Rules can be defined as hard rules or easy rules from the point of view of the individuals involved. It is easy for spouses to agree on space and time rules, but it is harder to settle on rules for work and food. What seems easy to adults, may seem difficult to a child. Safety rules were seldom mentioned during the interviews and will not be discussed in this section.

Deportment. Disputes over deportment echo through other substantive areas. Parents make rules for children, and they also make rules about how the children should respond to the rules. Generally, the mothers find little fault with the conduct of their children, but the stepfather, newly arrived in the family, often finds little to praise. The main complaint of stepfathers is the use of "back talk" by children in response to an order. Stepfathers are almost unanimous on this point. What the stepfathers call back talk, the mothers call "discussion." Mothers are more willing to

negotiate or explain a rule. Stepfathers say it once. This was the case with Virginia and Gene:

I was strict with Essie, but I talked to her adult-to-adult. If Essie did not think a rule was fair, she could question it. And you couldn't say, 'Because.' She wouldn't accept that. She would say, 'That's no reason.' But Gene feels that a parent-child interaction is appropriate--if you're familiar with transactional analysis.

Sure.

Sometimes I think Essie is just confused by Virginia's wording. Virginia will say, 'Would you like to clear off the table?' Essie, being an honest kid, says, 'No, I wouldn't.' I just tell her to clear off the table.

(Virginia & Gene, 11/5/75, p. 3).

Criticism of the child's deportment is perceived by the mother as criticism of her parenting. When stepfathers rankle at "back talk," mothers answer defensively. Dorothy admitted that Rose's behavior wasn't perfect before Dorothy and Karl were married, but her tone was angry when she said, "I just didn't have time to watch her like I should have, but I saw to the important things!" (11/11/75, p. 2). Children most often complain, talk back, about chore assignment, and at first, so do mothers.

Chores: Taking Responsibility. The man of the family suggests that children have regular duties to perform around the house. Almost to a man, they call this "taking responsibility." The subject of chores came up so often, that a few parents from intact homes were questioned about who

assigned duties in the house. It is clear from the responses of all of these people that whether a man is a stepfather or a bio-father, it is he who decides that children should have regular work assignments. Viola, for instance, who has two stepdaughters but no biological children, said it was her husband's idea that her stepdaughter help around the house (12/4/75, p. 9). Chore assignment can be a deflecting technique of the man of the house, an avoidance of doing the work himself. Women who work, often insist that their spouses help with the household duties. When there are children in the house, males counter-suggest that the children aid in the housework: "These kids are big enough to help around here." Usually, the suggestion engenders initial resistance in the mother. The mother perceives chore assignments for the child as an infringement on her realm of housemanager; she might welcome help from an adult male, but not from a child. She would rather do it herself. The working mother, especially, is faced with limited time and energy, which she does not want to expend on teaching a slow student (the child) a simple task which she could do more quickly and easily, and better. Jane Burgess (1970) says the single mother slights girls because she does not teach them household skills. In the present study, the stepfather's suggestion that the children "help out" represented an added burden to the mother. Viola was unenthusiastic when her husband suggested chores for her stepdaughters. She said she would "rather do it herself." She mentioned in particular the

dishes. She seemed afraid the girls would break everything. And regarding the vacuuming, "I hate to hear them whine " (12/4/75, p. 9).

Mothers often view chore suggestion as a disparagement of their childrearing ability. One reason they do, is that the stepfather's approach suggests that he thinks the child has been "spoiled," that he is lazy, that he "gets away with murder." Daisy did not react in anger, but she did explain why Emil didn't help around the house.

Harry said his first impression of Emil was that the boy was 'spoiled.' He said, 'His mother was at his beck and call for transportation and he never did anything to help her.' He recalled a time when Daisy came home from the store loaded with groceries, and Emil made no effort to carry them in the house for her. Daisy answered that where they lived, there was no bus, and it was necessary to go places by auto, and she didn't mind. As for chores, her first husband was a cripple, and, 'I just got used to doing everything.' (Daisy & Harry, 3/13/76, p. 3).

Gladys, a mother in an intact home, reacted with more fire to her husband's suggestion that the children help around the house: "It was Lou's idea that the children have duties in the first place," she said. Gladys said she hated to be told what to do, so her first response to his suggestion was, "Okay, so why don't we start with you?" (Gladys & Lou, 1/7/76, p. 1). Mothers react to chore assignment by becoming protective, arguing that their children are unequal to the task, that they are too young, too small or too busy:

Most issues have been over Essie taking 'more responsibility.' Gene, for example, thought Essie should wash the supper dishes, and Virginia thought

not, that it would take too much of Essie's free time. (Gene & Virginia, 11/5/75, p. 4).

Polly, whose own mother died when Polly was ten years old, said she hasn't the heart to make Amy work around the house. "She's only young once," and Polly did "too much housework" as a child herself.

If the spouses are able to compromise on the matter of children's chores, the mother gets into the spirit, and makes assignments of her own. However, beside the original suggestion, it is generally the man who follows through to see if the job has been done. "Harry really enforces the rules, he's much better at that than I am " (Daisy, 3/13/76, p. 1).

Dinnertime. Another area where the sex of the rule-maker determines the substance of the rule is in the matter of dinner table decorum. Fathers generally are in favor of mannerly children at the table, and often do not want the youngsters to join in the dinner-table conversation. Mothers, who usually have prepared the food, want it to be enjoyed. C. Dreyer and A. Dreyer (1973) in their study, "Family Dinner Time as a Unique Behavior Habitat," found that the dinner table was often a place where discipline invaded the meal:

Dinner in our middle-class families is a highly socializing situation. The parents are constantly teaching the young child, admonishing him about his behavior at the table. In an analysis of the subjects of conversation at the dinner table, 'Discipline' was the second largest category. (p. 300)

In the present study, lines were drawn at the dinner table. Mothers were unable to tolerate punishment at dinnertime or banishment from the table. Stepfathers, however, often see the children for the first time of the day at the evening meal, and use the time to recite a litany of the children's sins. Fred, a stepfather (6/7/75, p. 4), was punished as a child by being sent to bed without his supper. "Missing meals worked with me." But his wife, Beth, worried about this because she was afraid missing meals would affect the health of her children. Other families in this study were asked how they viewed this form of punishment, and only one stepfather favored it. Even mothers who said they never interfered in rule-making or enforcing, said they would not permit this form of punishment. Gail, who had persistently maintained that her husband was "boss" in the house, said that he had sent her son to bed without supper only once. She didn't like it and the children knew she was angry:

He knew I didn't like it, and the kids knew it too.

How did everyone know?

I said, 'What was that all about?' He told me he had sent Jack to bed, and I said, 'Is that for a few minutes, or for a long time, or what?' He said it was for the night. I said, 'What about dinner?' ... He knew I didn't approve.

She explained why her feelings ran so high in the matter:

I start dinner at 3:30 when I get home, and I put a lot of love into my meals--it gives me a chance to cluck. If one child is downstairs without dinner, nobody else is going to enjoy it either. (Gail, 3/18/76, pp. 18-19).

Justin, a stepfather with a strict upbringing, thought table manners should be a part of life, but his wife, Chloe, thought the food should be enjoyed and didn't like conflict at the dinner table. The problem was solved for the nonce, because Justin was too exhausted to eat when he got home, and the family rarely had a meal together (Justin & Chloe, 3/4/76, p. 6). Therefore, one way to handle a conflict about dinner-time manners is to table it.

Time: Getting Home, Getting to Bed. Time rules are easy rules for parents. Bedtime is regulated more on the basis of the energy ebb and need for privacy in the parents than on the child's need for rest. Parents admitted that they had "had enough" by early evening. Children were less enthusiastic about early retirement, and found excuses to prolong their time to be up and about. Interviews were interrupted by children's trips to the bathroom, their forages for water and food, and by uproar from the bedroom. Parents said the behavior was customary. Observance of rules about getting home on time is considered equally important by mothers and stepfathers, and again, children find home time rules hard to tolerate. Time rules represent an area where children undermine, and parents, almost always, unite.

Space and Sound. Stepfamilies often integrate or dis-integrate symbolically over possessions, space or sound. Spouses finalize their integration by declaring their possessions to be mutual property. Items which were marked "yours" and "mine" become "ours." Several families integrated or disintegrated around animals. Fred got a dog for his stepsons, and his wife Beth called it "our third child " (6/7/75, p. 5). Guy began to notice that his stepfather "wasn't so bad after all" when the stepfather brought home a big dog. When things aren't going well, animals get banished in lieu of children. Harry, who had trouble getting along with Emil, forbade Emil's dog house room. The dog was chained because there was no fence. Harry said a fence would be too expensive, even if Emil paid for half of it from his paper route money. During a telephone call, Harry said, "First you have to understand that's one stupid dog." Then Harry spent several minutes complaining that Emil let the dog in the house against orders. In fully integrated families, evidence of the child living there is clear; either the child is present, or the equipment of the child can be seen in the room where the interview takes place. When there is tension in the home over the step-relationship, stepparent and child may separate themselves physically, rarely staying in the same room. The stepparent and child may attempt to mark their territory in the house by either leaving possessions about, in the case of the child, or by forbidding the leaving of possessions about in the case of the stepparent. In one

family there was dramatic evidence that the stepfather had grown close to his school-age stepson, but not his teenage stepdaughter. The boy was present at the interview, and after showing me his possessions, sat comfortably between his mother and stepfather. The girl, Lorraine, who was interviewed in her own room, complained about how her stepfather tried to keep her cat out of the house. The dog stayed in because "He can't do much about that, Lucy was here before he was--she's thirteen years old " (p. 1). The stepfather, Ed, attempted to re-establish physical boundaries by not allowing any of Lorraine's equipment in any part of the house other than her own room. If she disobeyed these territorial directives, he hid her property. This included her purse, her homework, and the books she had set out for the next day (Lorraine, 1/15/76). In the present study, if the family was integrated, children were allowed full use of the house even when the parents considered an orderly, clean house particularly important. By full use is meant that they were allowed to be present in any room of the house without asking permission, excepting the parents' bedroom. All the children in this study were restricted to their own rooms under certain conditions: for play, for study, for sleep, or for punishment. They were also asked to go to their own chamber when the parents needed psychological space. Children often choose to be in their rooms as a result of their need for privacy.

An extreme example of space rules are those dealing with

the space of sound. Restriction exceeds the incarnate child, and extends to the voice, as well. Several stepparents who had difficulty relating to their stepchildren fastened on voice patterns as a source of annoyance Errol (9/11/75, p. 1) complained about "that whiney kid." A stepmother mimicked the "little bitty voice" of her stepdaughter (Step-parent class, 11/20/75, p. 3). Viola (12/4/75, p. 9) said she hated to "hear the kids whine," and Georgia, when relating an unpleasant incident with her stepson said, "He said it in that baby voice he uses when he wants anything " (12/11/75, p. 6). Emery said that when he and Frances were first married, his stepson, Joey, "whined a lot " (6/5/75, p. 3). Gregory (10/15/75) said the noise of stepchildren is louder. Stepfathers attempt to restrict the use of stepchildren's noisy equipment. Record players are abruptly turned off by the stepfathers, and ball-bouncing is curtailed in the house. The most extreme limiting of space or sound is absenting from the home by the stepparent in the form of divorce (self-limiting) or by the teenager moving away from home (self-limiting).

Age Appropriateness. For rules to work, to be enforceable, they must be age-appropriate, and change to keep current with the age of the child. A 6-year-old may be sent to bed at 8:00 pm, but an 8-year-old usually cannot go to sleep at 6:00 pm. What was good yesterday may not be valid today. Bedtimes must be adjusted to accommodate schoolwork or special

occasions. When a child is a teenager at the time of marriage, rules must be made and enforced with special care. A teenager has done a good deal of growing and developing in a social atmosphere which did not include the stepfather. Efforts by a stepfather to change firmly-established rules will be met with particular resistance. The very presence of an adolescent can be a disturbance as discussed in the section on undermining conditions. Forceful, indiscreet, and tactless efforts to change established rules for a young adult are doomed to failure. "I just never paid any attention to him " (Shelley, 7/13/75, p. 8). Teenage is a time of disengagement from the family. It is a time of untying. A stepfather who has made friends with a younger child, and "settled" the matter of house rules, can find the tug-of-war starting all over again when the child reaches adolescence. Integrated stepfather families face the same developmental crises as all families.

PART 2

RULE-ENFORCING: WHOSE GOING TO MAKE ME?

She had the reputation, shared with a long-vanished nurse named Olivia, of being able to 'do anything' with me, which merely meant an ability to provoke from a child behavior convenient for adults.
(Mavis Gallant, 1976, p. 39).

For rules to have meaning, to become part of the social structure, they must be obeyed. Just as there are rules for making rules--who is included, who if left out--there are rules for enforcing rules. Stepfathers can be part of one process, but not part of the other. It is common for a stepfather to be allowed to make rules concerning child behavior, but not be allowed to enforce the rules. In a situation where the stepfather makes rules, but only the mother is allowed to enforce the rules, a communication pattern emerges where the mother becomes the go-between, carrying messages between children and stepparent. "Your father wants...". When parent and stepparent disagree on enforcement modes and rules, but pretend to agree in front of the child, their struggle for control occurs behind the scenes. When one partner is allowed to make rules for child conduct and enforce the rules, but the other is not allowed to do either, patterns evolve where only one parent rules the roost. Jay Haley (1969) sees all relationships in terms of struggles for power, but the stepparent relationship is unique in that until the family can settle on a cooperative pattern, all power struggles are focused on the control of the stepchild. Until the parents have settled on a pattern for child control which they can live with, they are unable to move on to other matters. Once the struggle for power over the child is settled, they are free to disagree over, then settle, other areas of their lives.

Enforcement Front: Reenforcing the Enforcer

When the new man in the house, the stepfather, attempts to take on the fathering role of making and enforcing rules, most of the couples interviewed thought that the mother should not undermine the stepfather by arguing about child-management in front of the children. If he is to assume the role, they think, the partners must maintain a united enforcement front in order to pull it off. Even mothers who can't always keep quiet, say that they "should" support their husbands in front of the children. There were few exceptions to this attitude. The members of a stepparent class agreed that it was the only feasible course, as did the instructor. Of the families visited, one stepfather, Hoyt (2/19/76) criticized his wife in front of the children, and thought his course of action was proper, but two conditions obtained which influenced his attitude. First, his own daughter lived in the house. This gave Hoyt some biological backing, someone on his side, and Hoyt, unlike most stepfathers, ruled the roost in his house. Second, he was like the mothers who were in charge and considered it okay to criticize a spouse's discipline. Another exception was the woman whose child had had psychotherapy. In an earlier marriage, maintaining an enforcement front had put her in the position of go-between, a deputy carrying out the sheriff's instructions. The therapist had pointed out the disadvantages of the role, and she did not want to assume it again (Marie, 11/20/75, p. 7). Intact

families are not so adamant about presenting a united front. Minnie and Mickey (12/20/75, p. 2) made some attempt at supporting each other's disciplinary activities, but Alfred and Lotty (12/20/75, p. 3), openly undermined each other on the side of the children: "Take it easy on the kid." Gladys and Lou (1/7/75, p. 1) made it clear to the children that they often had opposing opinions, and although they tried to avoid open conflict in front of the children to prevent manipulation, if one or the other felt strongly enough, they would have it out on the spot. When the mother supported the stepfather in his disciplinary attempts, the reaction of the child was to resist.

Strategies for Maintaining an Enforcement Front. Once the couple has agreed that an enforcement front should be maintained, strategies must be developed to keep up the front in spite of individual differences in attitude about discipline. Two strategies are, signaling and waiting to disagree until the couple is behind closed doors. (1) Signaling: When one parent disapproves of the disciplinary action of the other, and is unable to wait until it can be discussed in private, the discontented parent attempts to signal his disapproval to his partner. Signals include pursed lips, glances, stiffening, turning away, nervous changes of physical position, red face and strident voice. Roy knew when Peggy thought that he was being too harsh with Claude,

because of her facial expression:

She gets that look.

What kind of a look--can you describe it?

I don't know if I can, but her eyes get sort of blank,
and she, I don't know, she gets that look!

(Roy, 11/6/75, p. 3).

The stepfather who alters his behavior on the strength of non-verbal clues, needs to talk it over privately. The stepfather who doesn't respond to a signal, has a wife who needs to talk.

(2) Behind-closed-doors: The favorite room for debate over discipline is the bedroom, although the bathroom may be called into use. A bathroom is an unreliable haven. One child knew his parents were fighting before the divorce. An entry from the field notes attests to this:

He remembers one day in particular when he was about four years old. His parents were fighting in the bathroom, and he had to urinate. He tried to get into the bathroom, but they pushed him out and closed the door, so he went out into the street and urinated on a fireplug. (Kent, 11/20/75, p. 3).

Bedrooms cannot assure privacy. Ruby remembers that her mother and stepfather tried to maintain an enforcement front.

"But you know how kids are, we listened at the bedroom "
(11/6/75, p. 3).

Most child guidance books stress the need for an enforcement front to keep from confusing the children, but there is disagreement on this point. Among those in favor of united parents are Chess, Thomas and Birch (1965):

Do we agree about what's required of the child? Do we support, rather than undermine, each other in general? When the father tells Jimmy he must stay home from grandmother's because he doesn't know how to act in the car, mother must not reverse the order. Some children learn to follow each parent's separate demands. Others become confused and stop following both. (P. 98).

Family therapists, however, emphasize that each person is an individual, with different opinions, and that each must speak for himself. Virginia Satir, in Peoplemaking, speaks of the "uniqueness" of each person (1972, p. 233), and in Conjoint Family Therapy, she discusses the fear "dysfunctional" family members have of disagreeing. Disagreement points out the fact that people are separate and not extensions of one another. Satir does not suggest that the parents haggle in front of the children, or fight through the children, both are dysfunctional. However, the child is confused by a "we think" statement, when it is clear that one parent is going along. "We have agreed on," would be more clear to the child. Thomas Gordon in P.E.T., Parent Effectiveness Training (1970), writes that it is unrealistic to expect parents to agree on childrearing all the time:

Parents Don't Have to Put up a 'United Front'
 Even more important, the advice to be consistent has led many a mother and father to think that they always should be together in their feelings, presenting a united parental front to their children. This is nonsense. Yet, it is one of the most entrenched beliefs in child-rearing. Parents, according to this traditional notion, should always back each other up so that the child is led to believe that both parents feel the same way

about a particular behavior.

Apart from the utter unfairness of this strategy--ganging up on the child in a two-against-one alignment--it often promotes 'unrealness' on the part of the parents.

(p. 21)

Sometimes parents give conflicting advice. An instructor in a stepparent class advised the parents to present an enforcement front, and at the same time, recommended that they read Gordon's book, P.E.T. Parent Effectiveness Training. The excerpt from Gordon's book above advises that a united front is unrealistic. The outcome of these double messages is unknown.

Child's Reaction: You're Ganging Up On Me. The stepparent issues an order, and the child asks the mother, "Do I have to?" If she says, "Do what your father says," the child reacts with resentment, confusion, and rebellion. Behavior ranges include those listed under undermining child, but intensity is increased if the mother sides with the stepfather. Essie said, "You two are ganging up on me!" (11/5/75, p. 4). Other children delivered "dark looks" or say, with Jim, "Who's going to make me?" Children at either limit of the age continuum are most outspoken in their resistance. When the enforcement front was continued in spite of the child's difficulty in accepting the condition, and the stepparent was unable to secure the cooperation of the child by the use of friending, the children in this study either became be-

havior problems (George, 10/15/75; Jim, 6/7/75; & Arthur, 10/15/75), or were, according to their parents, "nervous." (Joey, 6/5/75). Other children were described by their parents as "spacey " (Ollie, 9/9/75; Eric, 3/13/76; & Jack, 3/11/76). Techniques used to enforce rules had some bearing on the reaction of the child, and conversely, the reaction of the child had some bearing on the enforcement mode.

Enforcement Modes: "the child is father of the man"

(William Wordsworth)

Children find themselves under constant surveillance. They are rewarded and punished so that proper standards of conduct can be instilled in their emergent selves.

(Denzin, 1971, p. 319)

Parents have a sentimental order for punishment. Parents base their punishment modes on their own experience. However, a change of fashion can influence punishment modes. In the last century and before, it was common to punish the wayward child by sending it off to bed without its supper; we know this from children's stories of the period. Fashions change, however, and only two men in the present study favored restriction of meals. Enforcement modes, to be useful, must encourage the child to do what the parent orders him to do, but not make the child so resentful that he only wants to get even. Selma Fraiberg, in her book, The Magic Years (1959), explains why restriction of food is a poor

method of child control:

Even if the child is not really very hungry at the time the punishment is administered, the symbolic meaning of deprivation of food will produce fury, will touch off fantasies in which the parents are monsters who will even let a child go hungry, and the whole episode produces such outrage that the intended lesson is lost. (p. 262).

Parents punish according to their own experiences as children. Not every man who was beaten as a child, beat his stepchild, but all those who did use this harsh form of punishment had been beaten themselves. Other men attempted to "make up" to the child for what had been intolerable in their own past by kind treatment. Boys were spanked more often than girls. Henry Biller, who has done much work in the area of the influence of the father on children, writes in his book, Father Power:

Sons are subjected to corporal punishment for misbehavior more than daughters, but sons are given more freedom to explore before they are punished for straying too far. (p. 157).

Some punishment modes require maternal approval, such as spanking. Others, such as mere expressions of disapproval, do not. Mothers in the present study who permitted severe punishment such as frequent spanking, were those who had some problem controlling the behavior of their children before the time of the marriage. Girls who were behavior problems at the time of marriage, were punished by restrictions, removal of privileges, or threatened restrictions. Boys were spanked. The dimensions of the punishment mode range from expression of disapproval to corporal punishment with an instrument such

as a "belt" or "stick." At either limit of the punishment dimension, a mode inertia exists. Once set in motion, a punishment mode tends to stay in motion, regardless of changing conditions or the effectiveness of the enforcement technique. A child who was punished by "getting the belt" for disobeying safety rules at age three, continued to "get the belt" for other broken rules at age eleven (Nola and Hoyt, 2/19/76, p. 5). Spanking was continued when it didn't achieve the desired behavior: "Spanking doesn't seem to be working" (Dale, 3/11/76, p. 9). At the other extreme were parents who used only minor restrictions to gain the child's cooperation. In the middle range, parents had a repertoire of punishments beginning with restrictions of privileges, and moving up to spanking for major crimes (Virginia, 4/12/76, p. 1; Justin & Chloe, 3/4/76, p. 8; Roy & Peggy, 11/6/76, p. 4). By far the most popular punishment was restriction of television watching, although "yelling" was a favorite, as was camping and early bedtime. About half of the families spanked occasionally.

When the punishment mode of the stepfather does not agree with the sentimental order of the mother, she withdraws enforcement privileges. All stepfathers in this study were allowed to make some rules, but some were restricted from any enforcement of rules. When the stepfather makes rules, and the mother enforces, the mother becomes the conveyor of messages between stepparent and child.

Communicating the Rule: The Go-Between

Evolution of the role Rules can either be communicated directly to the child, or they can be transmitted through a person acting as a communication switchboard, the go-between. Go-between communication evolves in two ways: (1) The step-parent suggests that the mother correct some behavior in the child. As an example, the stepfather, Errol (9/11/75), objected to his stepdaughter's behavior, and he told his wife, Rhoda, to "straighten out that kid " (p. 5). (2) The mother objects to the enforcement mode of the stepfather, and assumes the task of enforcing herself, "Just let me handle it." All persons in the family play a part in the creation of the go-between role. Conditions which contribute to the emergence of the role include the biography of the spouses, and also includes any role models they have had. The child's part is in its behavior. The stepfather attempts to change the behavior, and the result is the creation of the go-between role. The biography of the child is also a contributing factor. In the household of Ed and Marie (11/20/75), Ed managed to achieve a closeness with Kent, age 11, which he never attained with Lorraine, age 18. When Kent went to his mother, Dorothy, and told her Ed was too strict, she said, "It looks like your problem is with Ed. Why don't you talk to him?" (p. 5). Dorothy had promised herself she wouldn't become a go-between as she had in a former marriage, but she made an exception with Lorraine, who had been rejected by her

biological father. When Ed made demands on Lorraine which Dorothy thought were unreasonable, Dorothy acted as go-between (Lorraine, 1/15/76, p. 2).

Advantages in Going-Between. As switchboard through which all communication must go, the go-between assumes a position of power. She allows through only those messages which she considers suitable; therefore, she acts as a censor. She becomes a central figure of the family, and confidant of all. She gains attention for herself. Both child and stepparent want to appear in a favorable light to the central family figure, the censor. She is both favored, and sought for favors. Her influence can spread to other areas of family life beside discipline. In this way, she can overcome the traditional woman's role of relative powerlessness.

Disadvantages to the Go-Between. As communication center for the family, the go-between is in charge of settling all disputes, and insuring fairness to all sides. Most go-betweens report this to be an enervating activity. The go-between is also held responsible for behaviors of stepparent and child. When things go wrong, the go-between gets blamed. As the stepparent and child become more distant and the stepfather's friending behavior wanes, the mother becomes distressed at their lack of closeness, but usually does not

recognize the part she has played in creating the conditions which cause the distancing.

Consequences of Going-Between. Limiting enforcement and acting as go-between acts as a distancing mechanism between stepfather and child. The stepparent and child are unable to talk with each other of their feelings, and thus become estranged. Satir (1972), writes about communication through a third person:

If the family habitually transactions business without all members present, and also has little pair time, then family members get to know each other through a third person. I call it acquaintance by rumor. The problem is that most people forget about the rumor part and treat whatever it is as fact. (p. 266).

Going-between has a cumulative effect, and in the present study, benign communications between the child and stepfather were responded to by the mother. In interviews, the mother not only answered for the child to the stepfather, but to the interviewer. The mother gets in the way of all messages which come to the child or issue from the child. To a lesser degree, the process occurred with the stepfather.

Part 1 of this chapter covered rule-making and integrative and disintegrative activities around rule-making. Sources and substantive areas of the rules were also discussed. In Part 2, the process of rule enforcement was examined. Enforcement modes which lead to the creation of the go-between role were discussed. In Part 3, the five

maker-enforcer patterns of family discipline will be examined in detail.

PART 3

MAKER-ENFORCER PATTERNS

Disciplining patterns in stepfather families can be categorized into five maker-enforcer groups. They are formed on the basis of who is allowed to make the rules for child conduct, and who is allowed to enforce the rules. The five patterns are: (1) Nobody left out, or integrated; (2) Stepfather left out, or not-my-kid; (3) mother left out, or anything-you-say-dear; (4) Stepfather in charge, or child-left-out; and (5) Everybody left out, or chaos. Disciplining patterns tend to be dynamic, and families do not remain in one category constantly, but move back and forth. For example, no family is cooperative all the time, and no family is in a state of chaos every day. Being the left-out member of a family is not a pleasant experience. The member left out protests in some way. This point will be illustrated as the patterns are discussed.

Integration: Nobody Left Out

The major dimension of this category is time. The integration of a family occurs over time, since time is required to develop the properties of trust and communication. If the mother attempts to give the stepfather full management privileges when he moves in, the child who does not yet trust the stepfather, is left out of the action. A trust relationship evolves when the stepparent demonstrates that he is on the side of the child and not the child's adversary. He does this by friending behavior: being a friend to the child. Friending behavior is made up of a great many properties and the process will be covered in detail in Chapter 6. The stepfather demonstrates his trust in the child by allowing the child to participate in decision-making. This gives the child some control over his own life. Therefore, self-control is a sub-property of trust. The child learns that he is trusted, and so learns to trust himself. Trust in the child is also demonstrated by allowing it free access to house space. The child is trusted to care for his environment as well as himself. The trust and communication properties are developed more easily when the family members spend time in the company of one another. The communication property involves learning to communicate directly, and not through a go-between, the mother. Learning this kind of communication takes time. The stepfather learns to communicate his wants regarding child behavior to the child. He

gradually, over time, assumes disciplinary duties. The communication property relates to the trust property in that learning to trust another person to accept a direct communication of wants takes time. The trust and communication properties are also related in that direct communication develops trust. One learns to trust the person who means what he says, and says what he means.

An Integrated Family: Earnest, Evelyn, and Renee.

Earnest was a scientist, Evelyn was an undergraduate student. Earnest, son of Jewish immigrants, hadn't been married at 29, and didn't expect to be. Six years ago he met Evelyn, a pretty redhead with a five-year-old daughter. Evelyn was an Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Earnest said he liked Renee the first time he met her; he found her pretty and nice. She was shy and nervous, but he was not surprised because he knew Renee had witnessed the violent battles between her parents, and that Renee missed her father. Evelyn had explained all this to Earnest. The first time the three of them went for an outing, Renee got car sick in Earnest's hat. Earnest was not upset. He had been pressed into the care of his younger siblings at an early age, and during high school, he ran a babysitting service. Earnest's father was neglectful and brutal, and Earnest vowed to be his opposite. Renee's first impression of Earnest was that he was "weird." When it became clear to Renee that Earnest and Evelyn were "serious" she thought, "Well, uh, I guess I'd better, uh, you know, get along."

When Earnest moved in (about a year before the marriage), Evelyn was having some difficulty controlling Renee. Renee was not allowed to see her father for a year because he had become physically violent with Evelyn. Renee missed her father and Evelyn said of her daughter, "she was punishing me." Disagreements between Evelyn and Renee ended in screaming matches. Earnest asked Evelyn if she wanted some help, and slowly he started making suggestions. Evelyn believed in an enforcement front "for the child's sake" but she rarely disagreed with Earnest on discipline because he was gentle and thoughtful. Renee was dyslexic, and she was having trouble in school. Earnest arranged for a special school. When Renee returned to public school, she was soon at the top of her class. Renee participated in decision-making. Recrea-

tion was one area where she participated freely. She had some input in disciplining. If she thought Earnest was being too strict, she was allowed to present her case. Renee managed the visits with her biological father. Contact was made over the phone, and Renee and her father agreed on a time which did not interfere with the present family's schedule. Earnest considered himself "strict" but the family did not dwell too much on rules and regulations for Renee, because the matter was more or less settled. (Synopsis of Earnest, Evelyn & Renee, 9/29/75).

Not-My-Kid: Stepfather Left Out

The mother is the legal custodian of the child. All stepfather families start in the not-my-kid category. There are two dimensions to the category: It's not my kid, and not-my-kid-you-don't!

A. It's not my kid. This is the springboard dimension. The stepfather asks the mother, "Since it's not my kid, what do you want me to do?" The mother usually responds, "Well, we'll work it out." From this starting point, the stepfather family can move into any of the other four patterns. Depending on the behavior of all three, he can either move up into the integrated pattern, or into one of the male-dominant patterns described later in this section. If his interaction with the child is displeasing to the mother, she counters with interference, which springboards the family into the other dimension of this category, not-my-kid-you-don't.

B. Not-my-kid-you-don't. This dimension has the property of prohibition. The mother openly declares the child off-limits to the stepfather. The mother assumes a go-between role. Having one's disciplining efforts undermined is an unpleasant experience and the stepfather protests. He counters with adult discipline: His criticism of the child's behavior increases. His criticism is directed at the mother since she is acting as go-between. He also engages in displaced criticism and finds fault with his partner's spending and cooking. His contact has been limited so he decreases his friending behavior toward the child. Decreased friending is a property of the protest of a left-out individual.

Another property of the not-my-kid-you-don't dimension is instability. The conflict is open, so there is an opportunity for the partners to settle hostilities or to end the marriage. The property of stability is introduced only if the child is a teen-ager. When there is a promise that the child will leave home in a short time, the dimension can be a holding pattern, or short-term stability. The pattern of not-my-kid-you-don't is an example of a disintegrative maker-enforcer pattern.

A Not-My-Kid Family: Roy, Peggy and Claude. Peggy was from Canada and worked for the phone company. She was an Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Roy was from central California and a craft worker. He was half Anglo-Saxon and half American Indian, and a "fallen away" Catholic. Roy's father was an alcoholic. His mother was a strict disciplinarian. Roy

went to Catholic school where the nuns were strict and used corporal punishment. Peggy's parents were not strict. Peggy was married when she was still in high school and after she was pregnant with Claude. Claude's father went to Viet Nam when Claude was a baby. The couple was divorced after one year of marriage. Claude saw his father after the divorce, but knew him only as "a man." The partners did not discuss their stepness with six-year-old Claude, but they said they would "when he asks questions." Peggy and Roy married when Claude was four-and-a-half, and lived together for about a year prior to the wedding. It was in this family that after about a month of trial, Peggy decided Roy was too strict with Claude and said, "not-my-kid-you-don't." Roy said, "It was heavy." At the time of the interview, the couple still fought over Claude's behavior, but Roy was taking child-rearing classes at a local community college. Peggy was taking the class with him. Roy reasoned that he might have expected too much of Claude, and he wanted to learn about normal growth and development in the young child. Peggy soon approved of most of the interaction between Roy and Claude. The family was moving toward integration. (Synopsis of Roy, Peggy & Claude, 11/6/76).

The patterns anything-you-say-dear and child-left-out are really dimensions of one category. The dimensions are separated into two categories because the effect on the child is completely different. When the stepfather asks the mother, "What do you want me to do?" the mother can say, "I want you to take over," but have the conception of a man of the house as one whom the mother pretends to agree with and then does what she thinks is best. When the stepfather issues an order, she says, "Anything-you-say-dear," and then enforces the rules she agrees with. On the other hand, in the other dimension of this category, the mother can say, "I want you to take over" and mean it. This dimension is the child-left-out pattern.

Anything-You-Say-Dear: Mother Left Out

A property of this category is that the stepfather makes the rule, and the mother subverts the rule. Students of family literature will recognize this as the traditional pattern of childrearing. The mothers interviewed who fell into this category were all in their late fifties or early sixties, and two of them said they would no longer follow this model. This pattern is the male-dominant family of the past. Henry Biller explains the dynamic:

If the father wins arguments, he is thus labeled dominant by the observing researcher, who goes off to tote up his results, missing the fact that often the supposedly submissive mother goes ahead and does what she wants anyway, ignoring the noise of the supposedly dominant male. (1974, p. 71).

The mother uses the strategy of the go-between to subvert the stepfather's rules. She acts as enforcer-of-rules, and short-circuits the communication between ruler and rulee. The stepfather issues an order such as more chore assignments for the children. The mother says, "Yes, dear," does not relay the message and does the chores herself. If she is caught in the act, she says she forgot, or the child was sick or out of the house. As go-between and rule-enforcer, she can use the strategy of delaying. She can wait to carry out an order until it is too late. "Oh, my, is it eight-thirty? I forgot to tell the kids to go to bed at eight!"

The effect of the go-between role is a breakdown in communication. The breakdown is not only between stepfather and

child, but since the mother does not openly rebel, but subverts, the mother and stepfather have nothing to discuss. Her maneuvers are all behind the scenes. He is faced with a situation he cannot control and cannot discuss. She does not discuss her maneuvers with the children, but occasionally tells them, "We had better not tell your father." It is understood that she will run interference for them. The traditional pattern is not harmful to children, excepting that they do not have the opportunity to get acquainted with the man of the house. The stepfather and child do not become close with one another, because the mother is between them. Anything-you-say-dear is an example of disintegrative disciplining, because the stepfather and children are separated. In this category, the stepfather has a token piece of the action.

An-anything-You-Say-Dear Family: Klaus, Jessica, Shelley

and her brothers, and Herbert. Jessica was pregnant with her third child, Shelley, when her husband was killed in an accident in 1949. She had lived in a middle-western farming town all her life. All the persons in this family account were Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Klaus was a friend of the family, and at forty-five had never been married. The opinion of the townfolk was that the children needed a father, and they approved of a marriage between Jessica and Klaus. Jessica said, "There was no romance with Klaus, he never showed his feelings." Jessica did most of the parenting, because she thought the children were her responsibility. Klaus was a "stern" man, but when she didn't agree with him about childrearing, she did what she thought was best, because they were her children. They seldom had any open conflict over the children's rearing. The boys in the family worked on the farm with Klaus, and most of their association was around work. Klaus became Shelley's stepfather before she was two years old. She found him cold and unaffectionate,

and difficult to talk to.

Jessica and Klaus had a child in 1951. Shelley remembered that Klaus was "real happy about that," but Klaus was no more affectionate with his own son than he had been with his stepchildren. The mother took care of the childrearing for all four children. The children had a close relationship with each other. When Klaus was killed in an accident in 1957, Shelley was eight. She remembers feeling sorry for her mother, but she didn't feel "too bad" about Klaus's death.

Eight years later, in 1965, Jessica married Herbert. He had been a friend for years. Her children were in their teens and had outside interests. They were in favor of their mother's marriage because they thought she seemed lonely. Shelley and her brothers were civil to Herbert, but he was not considered by Shelley to be part of the family. Occasionally Jessica would tell the children, "Herbert doesn't like what you're doing." But since he never spoke to them directly about what displeased him, Shelley, when grown, said that she didn't concern herself with what Herbert liked or didn't like. The children had many family jokes, which Herbert did not understand, and they made no attempt to bring him into the family circle. Shelley was close to her mother until the teens. Jessica described herself as "permissive" with her children, but Shelley found her too strict, and unable to talk about sex. The mother called sex "getting serious." Shelley left home as soon as she finished high school. Although Shelley drifted, and became part of the "Berkeley scene" for a time, she never got into serious trouble and did finish college. Shelley obtained a well-paying job, and married a scientist. They bought a middle-class house in the Bay Area in 1975. Shelley's appraisal of the family effect on the children: "We kids all turned out okay. We had our troubles, but you know, we all turned out okay."
(Synopsis of Jessica, 7/7/75 & Shelley, 7/13/75).

Child-Left-Out: Stepfather in Charge

In this family pattern, the stepfather is in charge of child-management. With the mother's encouragement, he both makes rules and enforces them. The mother also enforces the stepfather's rules. Child-left-out was the only pattern in which the child showed ill effects from the maker-enforcer arrangement. Children were described by their parents or

stepparents as "spacey," "going blank," "forgetful," "absent-minded" on one hand, or "behavior problems" on the other.²

The children were all named as "a problem" by the mother before the stepfather arrived on the scene. After the influence of the stepfather, many moved from behavior problems to "spacey."³ The children were all very young boys, the oldest was six.

The pattern evolves when the mother answers the stepfather's question, "What do you want me to do?" by saying, "I want you to take over!" In this category, she means just that. One of the properties of the category is focus on child control. The mother, unable to "handle" the child before the stepfather arrives, wants help. The very word "control" was used often. The children were expected to obey all rules. Lee Saulk says of the child who always obeys:

If a child always obeys the wishes of his parents, that child has probably been exposed to extremely harsh discipline, including severe punishment. All his individuality has been--sometimes quite literally--been beaten out of him. A totally obedient child has usually given up. (1973, p. 160).

The strategy for maintaining control in this category is harsh corporal punishment. The stepfather, in his effort to control an unruly child, uses a "belt" or "stick" to punish the boy. Often the mother recommended the use of these enforcement techniques. "I told him to take a stick to him" (Beth, 6/7/75, p. 4). Another property of this category is male dominance. The stepfather in this pattern is in charge. The mothers were anxious to have a strong male figure in the house. Gail said she was glad to turn over the "responsi-

bility" of rule enforcement to her husband (3/11/76, p. 11). Beth said, "A woman alone with boys will be extra hard on them to make up for the fact that there's no man around " (6/7/75, p. 4). There was a range of reaction behavior in the children. Some became spacey, while others remained unruly in spite of harsh punishment. Jim set fire to the house (6/7/75, p. 4) and Ivan got into a knife fight (3/11/76, p. 10). Grown stepchildren think of themselves as having been "bad." Guy said, "See, I was a real problem." (4/23/76, p. 1). George said, "I was always breaking rules and always getting punched for it. I was pretty rotten as a child, always up to some bizarre mischief " (10/15/76, p. 1). Thomas Gordon (1970) says the use of parental power is an effective way to control children, but that there are side effects:

Many if not most, of these side effects are unfortunate. Children often become cowed, fearful, and nervous as a result of 'obedience training'; often turn on their trainers with hostility and vengeance; and often break down physically or emotionally under the stress of trying to learn behavior that is either difficult or unpleasant for them. The use of power can produce many harmful effects as well as risks for the trainer of animals--or children. (pp. 169-170).

The onset of the stepfather in an in-charge position is sudden. Sudden takeover is a property of this category. The mother can't control her son, so she turns him over to a stranger. The child entering a new situation finds himself without a champion. Erica, a grown stepchild, said of the "spacey" children in this category:

I can imagine what happens. The kid feels deserted. I mean, he's lost his father, and now his mother marries this guy and says, 'Now you're going to do what he says, and if you're a bad kid, he'll get you.' The kid has no place to go but into outer space--maybe that's inner space. I was really scared of my stepfather at first, and I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't felt my mom was there to see that I'd be okay.

(Erica, 2/14/76, p. 1).

Another property of the child-left-out pattern is the male sex of the children. There were girls in the present study who were behavior problems at the time of the marriage, but they were not punished by harsh corporal methods, and they did not become "spacey." Young age at the time of the marriage was another property of the category. The oldest boy was just six, all the others were under five. One was as young as two years old. The mothers in these families were especially anxious to preserve the marriage: this is the property of conservation. In almost all the families interviewed, in all categories, the couple relationship was the most important to the spouses, but in the other categories, when the mother thought her husband too harsh with the child, she became subversive or complained. In the child-left-out category, the mother was willing to allow the stepfather to take over, even when she thought him too severe. A final property of this pattern is disparagement of the child by the mother. "He's awful," said the woman in the stepparent class about her son (11/20/75, p. 3). Only one child was present at an interview in this category, and the mother corrected him constantly, telling him to "speak up," to

"sit up" and to stop making nervous gestures with his hands (Nola, 2/19/76). The child was placed in a scapegoat role in these families, and although there were other children in the family, he was considered the "problem."

To summarize, the child in this pattern is the one who is left out of the action. The family themes are control, stepfather-dominance, and harsh punishment. The mother in these families saw her role as one of "cooperation" with the stepfather in matters of discipline. This pattern demonstrates the inadvisability of the stepfather "take over" because the child in this pattern is either a behavior problem, and continues to be, or becomes "spacey."

A Child-Left-Out Family: Hoyt, Nola, Eric, Heather, Iva

Nola was brought up in California. She was a housewife. She was Protestant and went to church regularly. She was Anglo-Saxon. In high school, she became pregnant, and married the father of the child, a "half-Jewish" rock musician. The marriage ended when Eric, their son, was three years old. Eric rarely saw his father after the divorce because Nola disapproved of the father's pony tail and his marijuana smoking. Both Nola and her ex-husband came from families with upper middle incomes. Hoyt was a "fallen away" Anglo-Saxon Catholic. He was beaten by his mother, his father, his stepmother, and the nuns at the Catholic schools he attended. He was married at nineteen to a girl of sixteen whom he had impregnated. The first child, a boy, was punished by Hoyt by using a "belt." His daughter, Heather, "watched what was going on," and was able to avoid "getting the belt." Hoyt became a foreman in a metal shop and was in charge over thirteen people. He said he was a "father" to all of them. Nola and Hoyt met when she was working at the shop. She arranged the meeting by bumping into him. His marriage was breaking up when they began seeing one another socially.

Nola was unable to control her three-and-a-half-year-old son. She said, "He was real hyper, and he had no discipline." Nola and Eric got into yelling contests. Hoyt

observed the interaction, and asked Nola if she wanted him to help her control Eric. She said yes. "I mean, I just couldn't handle him." Hoyt "gave the belt" to Eric, but for a time he continued to be a problem. Only once did Nola protest. When Eric wouldn't wear his slippers, Hoyt dipped Eric's feet into the fishpond. Nola finally complained. "I really blew my top--I said, 'What do you think he is, a dog you can train? He's not a dog, he's a little boy.'" For the most part, however, Nola allowed Hoyt to punish Eric as he saw fit. Eric became subdued and absent-minded, and "forgets" what he was told to do.

Hoyt's daughter, Heather, age eleven, came to live with the family after her own stepfather made sexual advances to her. Heather was able to avoid "getting the belt" for misbehavior, but Eric was not. Nola became angry that only her child was punished, and once insisted that Heather get the belt for some transgression. Hoyt agreed, but said that Nola must be the punisher. Nola and Heather went into another room. Nola struck the bed, and instructed Heather to cry out. Nola and Heather are "close." Heather has not seen her mother for three years because of Heather's stepfather. She was not allowed to visit her mother who lived in another state, and the mother had not made the journey to visit Heather.

Nola and Hoyt had one "our" child, a girl of five. Nola protected Iva, the little girl, and wouldn't let Hoyt punish her. Nola said, "She's always sorry for what she's done, and anyway, she's just a little girl." Iva got special privileges. She was not required to observe space rules that the others observed. Nola said she thought Hoyt was too strict with Eric, but, "I can't do anything about that now." She said she could see that Iva was not mistreated.

Nola was an immaculate housekeeper. She didn't allow Heather and Eric access to the living room. The food in the house was controlled. The children were not allowed to go to the refrigerator for food between meals. Dessert was served an hour after dinner to give their food "a chance to settle." Iva was allowed to have friends in to play. The older children were required to give Nola the phone number of their guests before they could have friends visit. Heather found this no problem, but Eric was too shy to ask his classmates their phone numbers, and so he had few friends and they rarely visited.

Eric was handsome and anxious to answer questions well. His answers were hesitant but intelligent. He rubbed his hands nervously between his knees during the interview, until his mother told him to stop. Then he rubbed the sofa. At age ten he was unable to tie his shoes. He did poorly at school, but a recent IQ test placed him in the exception-

ally-bright category. Hoyt wanted to have his son live with the family, because his son's stepfather beat the boy. Nola, however, "can't stand" the child, and refused. Hoyt's impression was that he had done a "good job" as father and stepfather.

(Synopsis of Nola & Hoyt, Eric, Heather & Iva, 2/19/76).

Chaos: Everyone-Left-Out

The chaos pattern is the most disintegrated of all the categories. The category is distinguished by a state of neutralization. Nobody in the family gets what he wants. The biological parent assumes the role of not my kid, but she does not manage the child either. The stepfather counters with open resistance. Communication is indirect, and nothing gets done. There were only two families in this study in the chaos category. One marriage ended in divorce. Other families reported on chaos families they had known, however.

A property of the chaos category is fixed role perception. The partners have firm ideas of what men and women do, but their ideas are not the same. Another property is non-cooperation. There is no sharing of money, work, or goals. The category is marked by the property of distance. Children are kept separate from stepparents by mutual wish. The partners are also separate much of the time. There is considerable similarity with this category and Solomon's maximal distance families (1974):

Discipline problems and conflicts are usually resolved by someone in the group leaving or being sent away, rather than by family members coming together and serving as resources for one another. The implicit norm in such families may be expressed as 'If you have a serious problem, you must go off by yourself and remain isolated until you have some control over the matter. Do not depend on us.'

The development of the maximal-distance homeostatis seems related to the marital partners' shared conviction that spouse will repeatedly fail to gratify their needs--a distortion that is a product of childhood deprivation. (pp. 10-11).

The chaos family presented in the present study was distant, and the spouses were deprived in their childhood as in Solomon's families. Solomon says it is difficult to get a maximal distance family in therapy together, because they are not accustomed to sharing problems, or even being in the same room together. The chaos family in the present study was interviewed separately, because they refused to be interviewed together. Each member was advised that family therapy might be helpful, and each member was given a list of therapists they might consult,¹ but at the end of the interviews, they had not discussed the matter with each other. The mother, however, in an indirect communication, left the list of therapists lying around the house in plain sight.

A Chaos Family: Floyd, Polly, Amy, Forrest. Polly was a health worker. She was of Mexican decent and was reared a Catholic. Her mother died when Polly was ten, and Polly took care of her younger brothers. Her father drank heavily after his wife's death. When Polly was twenty, her father remarried, and Polly left home. She married her first husband when she was thirty. He was a blond, blue-eyed man of Spanish decent. He died when Polly's son was seven, and her daughter was two-and-a-half-years-old. Polly "likes a good

time" and although she worked steadily to support her children, she liked to go out drinking and had many men friends. She did not marry again until she was fifty-two. She was doubtful about marrying while the children were little, because she wanted to wait until they were old enough "to protect themselves." When Floyd moved in, Forrest was nineteen, Amy was thirteen.

Floyd grew up in Canada, the son of a bar owner. He was Anglo-Saxon, and reared as a Protestant. Floyd's father was at the bar from morning until late at night, and Floyd's mother did most of the childrearing. Floyd's family was very poor, and he was often hungry. When he was old enough, he went to his father's bar in the evening, and father and son came home drunk. When Floyd was twenty-three, he met the daughter of an American army officer, married her and moved to the Bay Area. He worked for a utility company from 1952 until the present time. Floyd's wife always held a better-paying job than he did. Floyd and his wife had one daughter, and she and Floyd became very close. He talked over his trouble with his daughter instead of his wife. Floyd and his wife had little in common. She was well-educated, he was not. He liked a night of drinking, she liked to read. Floyd took to stopping off at the local bar on his way home from work. One night he met Polly there. They fell in love almost at once. After a few months, he moved in with Polly--into the house her husband had left her. They lived together a year-and-a-half before they were married. They drank and fought almost every night. After they were married, Polly stopped going out drinking with Floyd except on weekends. She liked to read, he liked to watch TV. Floyd and Polly's daughter, Amy, had a heated argument three days after he moved in, and they hardly spoke a civil word to each other after that. Amy was a college student, age eighteen. Forrest was twenty-three and still living at home. He just used the house to change clothes and eat. He had little to do with the family. Forrest was a college drop-out. He did few chores around the house. Forrest did not work regularly, and Floyd resented the fact that Forrest ate so much, but did not contribute to the family finances.

Polly and Floyd fought constantly. He felt Polly should manage her children as his mother did. Polly always felt sorry for her children because they grew up without a father, so she "spoiled" them, but resented Floyd's criticism. Polly willed her home to her children, so Floyd refused to do any repairs around the house. The shower leaked into Amy's bedroom. Polly said it was a man's job to see that it got fixed. Floyd said he didn't know who to call. When they were married, Polly decided to get new bedroom furniture for Amy. She was able to afford everything but the dresser. The couple did not share their incomes. Polly wanted Floyd to buy the dresser. He said with Amy's cat in the house ruining everything, it was pointless. Amy kept her clothes in boxes for two

years. When the fights escalated between Polly and Floyd, he complained about the children's behavior; she complained that he didn't do anything around the house. He said Forrest didn't do anything, and anyway, the house belonged to Polly and her children. Polly countered that her first husband fixed things, and she never had to work for a living when he was alive. Floyd said he was tired of hearing about her dead husband. She said he didn't mind sleeping in her ex-husband's bed. When the argument reached this point, Floyd stormed out and spent the night in a motel. Other than the fights, there was little talk in the home. Amy said, "You should see that house. If you walk in, everyone is in his own room with the door closed--no one talks to anyone."

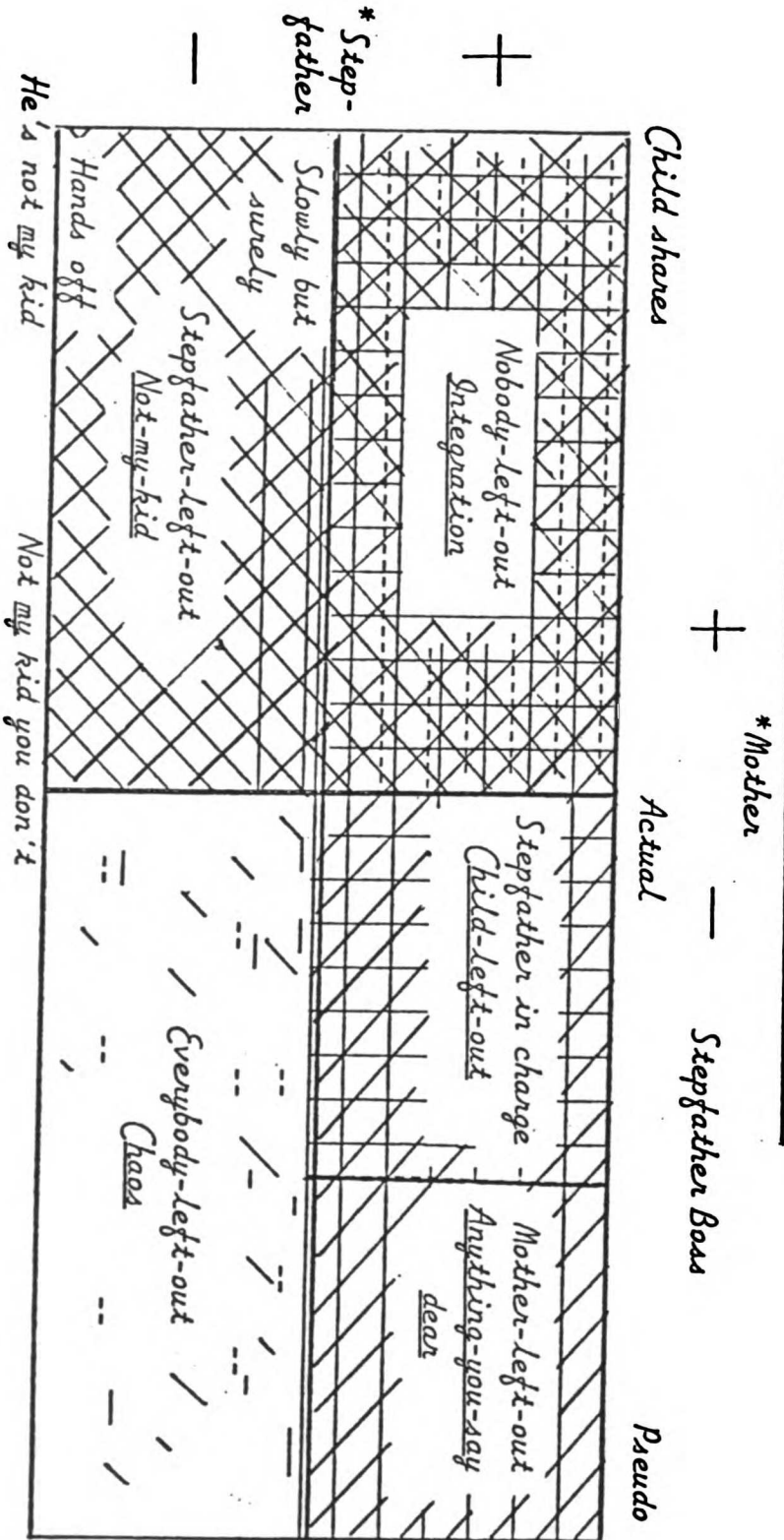
Amy was failing in high school when Floyd moved in. With the help of a special class, she gained a new attitude, and became a B-plus student. Forrest and Amy became good friends after the marriage; they had been enemies. Forrest thought his mother was happier since the marriage, and he was pleased that she no longer went drinking every night. He thought Floyd was a nice guy, and expected to become closer friends with Floyd once he (Forrest) found himself a place of his own.

(Synopsis of Floyd, Polly, Forrest and Amy, 7/12/75, 9/25/75, 10/27/75, 11/19/75).

Structure and Interaction in Rule-Maker-Enforcer Disciplining Patterns: Summary

Figure 1 illustrates the structural and interactional patterns in the various disciplining rule-maker-enforcer patterns. Families fit more or less into these patterns. The mother's rule-making-and-enforcing activity is represented in Figure 1 by diagonal lines, slanted to the right for rule-making, to the left for enforcing. The stepfather's rule-making is represented by horizontal lines, his enforcing by vertical lines. The child's participation is represented by broken horizontal lines. The integrated pattern

Rule Maker/Enforcer Disciplining Patterns



*KEY

<p>Mother enforces rules</p> <p>///</p>	<p>Steptather enforces</p> <p>\\</p>	<p>Child's Rules</p> <p>=====</p>
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Figure 1

is a jungle of interactional lines--everyone participates, everyone in the family is part of family business. Participation in rule-making-and-enforcing is both social-psychological and social structural, because participation has a meaning for the persons which is psychological as well as structural. To participate in rule-making gives one a feeling of belonging as well as a feeling of status. None of the other structural patterns shows full participation by all family members. The remaining structural patterns can be thought of as fluid, moving closer or further away from the integration pattern. The not my kid pattern, located at the bottom left hand corner of the diagram, is the starting point for all families. In this pattern, the mother makes rules and enforces rules. Under the influence of integrative discipline, the family can move slowly toward the integrated pattern. Moving up to integration, the stepfather begins to make a few rules (represented by horizontal lines), until the full participation of the integrative pattern is attained. If, on the other hand, disintegrative discipline is the order of the interaction, the family can move to the right into the chaos pattern where there is little participation in family business. This is demonstrated schematically by the absence of interacting lines--there are a few rule-making attempts, by the mother, the stepfather, and the child, but rules are not obeyed and nothing gets done. Everyone is left out. When the mother asks the stepfather to take over the management of the child, the family moves to the upper right hand of the diagram, into one of the stepfather-in-charge

patterns. In the anything-you-say-dear pattern, the stepfather is titular head of the household. He makes the rules, and the mother enforces them. This gives her the opportunity to enforce the rules she thinks are appropriate. Although the avowed structure of the house is that the stepfather is in charge, his position is that of pseudo boss. This pattern is most distant from the integrative one, because there is little conflict; therefore, change is unlikely. If the stepfather is actually in charge, he both makes and enforces rules, and the mother enforces the rules which the stepfather makes. This is the child-left-out pattern. The child in this pattern is controlled, and does not participate in rule-making. He has no champion. Therefore, his status is lower than in any of the other patterns. The stepfather does communicate directly with the child. Therefore, it is a more integrated pattern, there are more interactional lines in the child-left-out structural condition than in the other pattern. The only one who is left out of the interaction is the child.

In Chapter 6, the movement of families from one structural pattern to another in the presence of friending is presented.

Footnotes

1. At the suggestion of the Committee on Human Research, University of California, San Francisco, I arranged to have three therapists available to which the families could be referred. A list of the therapists' names, addresses, and telephone numbers was given to all families. They were also given the phone numbers and location of their local Mental Health Departments. After some of the interviews, I suggested that the family might find family therapy helpful.
2. Gilpin, quoted by Singer (1976) suggests that the behavior problem child may be acting out a depression which he is experiencing over the loss of a parent through divorce or death.
3. Nathan Ackerman writes of the function of the scapegoat in a family. The scapegoat, usually a child, is the focus of problems in the family, i.e., the scapegoat's role is to act out the problems so that the family members don't have to look at their own fears and problems. An account of the therapist's role in helping the scapegoat, can be found in Treating The Troubled Family (1966, pp. 210-236).

Chapter 5

REPRISE

The friending process in integrative discipline is presented in Part III. In order to discuss friending as clearly as possible, some major conceptualizations which have emerged in the analysis of the data are presented in the present chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to offer a recapitulation of Part II. The processes and conditions which are discussed in the preceding chapters are multidimensional, and they have been described in some detail. In the present chapter, an outline of the developing theory of integration in stepfather families around the problem of discipline is offered. In Part III of this work, the focus moves to friending. Part II focuses on discipline. The present chapter, then, summarizes Part II of this report.

Growing Points

A. The major impediment to integration of the stepfather family is child management. Deciding who is to teach the child to behave in ways which are acceptable to both parents is the dimension of the integrating process which

makes remarriage when children are involved such a tricky business. Disintegrative discipline is the name given here to a group of processes which leave one member of the family odd-man-out. Disintegrative discipline begins with an attempt by the stepfather to control the behavior of the mother's children. In the eyes of another family member, the stepfather's attempt is coercive. Coercive may mean simply moving too fast to assume disciplinary duties for the comfort of the mother and/or child, in some cases, or in other cases, coercive means actual harsh, strict rule-making and enforcing. Coercive discipline leads to the formation of family rule-making/rule-enforcing patterns where one family member is left out of decision-making. In all but one of the left out patterns, discipline interpreted as coercive by the mother or child results in an attempt by the mother and/or child to undermine the stepfather's disciplining. This undermining is called disintegrative undermining because family members choose up sides and the outcome is unequal power distribution: the mother, already in power, is aligned with the child against the stepfather. Disintegrative undermining comprises many sub-processes, all of which put distance between the family members: (1) Distancing dimensions. (a) The mother, acting as go-between in left-out, maker-enforcer patterns, interferes with communication between stepfather and child. Placed between the two, she interprets the behavior of each to the other. The impressions the stepfather and child have of one another are distorted by passing through

the perceptual switchboard of the mother. The insinuation of the mother between her husband and her child creates a division between the two. (b) Distance exists when the mother pretends to communicate the rule of the stepfather, but instead subverts his direction. When the mother insinuates herself in this way, open conflict is avoided at the expense of direct communication. Children join in a conspiracy of what-daddy-doesn't-know-won't-hurt-him (or us). (c) Distance between the spouses is created when the stepfather objects to his position of co-leader of the household being undermined by mother and/or child. Spouse conflict, in its most severe form, leads to a household situation where maximum distance is the order of the household--the members speak only to disagree. In the most extreme form, the distance created by undermining leads to the dissolution of the marriage. (d) When the stepfather employs abrupt, harsh punishment, and the mother does not undermine him, one child becomes distant from the rest of the family. The "belonging" position of that one child is undermined and he is put in the position of odd-man-out.

B. Communication patterns define the relationship in stepfather families. The patterns of communication are, as Haley (1959) puts it, a way of "maneuvering to define the relationship " (p. 323). The presence or absence of undermining, direct or indirect communication, defines the positions and the roles of the participants in the following ways: (1) When the mother places herself between stepfather

and child, she is (a) defining the stepfather as a person dangerous to the child, and (b) defining the child as a person too weak to speak for himself. (c) She is defining herself as the only person in the family who knows what is best for husband and child, and in so doing, she (d) defines herself as the most important person in the family. (2) The stepfather who is kept from the child by the mother, is defined by the child as (a) too dangerous to trust, or (b) a man who is controlled by the mother and therefore, not masterful. (c) The outcome of (a) and (b) is that the stepfather is defined through the mother's switchboard distortion as a poor role model. (3) When the mother resigns her position as child champion, and asks the stepfather to "take over" the management of the child, she is defining the child as (a) not worthy of her concern, and (b) so "bad" that he requires an outsider to manage him. She is again (c) defining the stepfather as a person dangerous to the child. She is (d) defining herself as inadequate to the management of the rearing of her own child. (4) The stepfather who wants changes in child behavior is (a) defining the child as displeasing, and (b) defining the mother as less than a totally adequate parent. (5) The mother who works with the stepfather on his gradual assumption of child management duties is defining the stepfather-child relationship as a dynamic one which will, in time, become an integrated one, and she is defining the stepfather as one who will become a full management partner.

C. The stepfather is a successor. As successor to the father in the family, the stepfather is limited in his options to use the formal and informal structure of the family, or to restructure the leadership. For example, he is limited in the use of power ploys used by a new boss in a working situation.¹ Use of the following strategies for bolstering up his position which would be available to a new boss in industry, is limited. (1) Bringing in his own lieutenants. Some stepfathers bring in their own children, which are loyal to them, but children do not have the rank of management. (2) Use of the formal family structure. The stepfather does not have the full rank of father at the beginning of the union, so he cannot gain control by pulling rank. If the stepfather tries to pull rank, he is undermined. He does not have the power to hire and fire. (3) Use of the informal structure of the family. Informal structure is also unavailable to the stepfather because he does not know what it consists of. He does not know the folklore, the jokes, the informal relationships, and in essence, the sentimental order of the family. Therefore, the stepfather not only has to "get to know" his spouse, he has to "learn" his family, until the new unit can develop a sentimental order unique to itself.

D. Time allows relative stability of the stepfather family to emerge. Integration takes about two years. The time dimension is salient to family stability because of the following processes: (1) Formulating new formal and informal

relationships in the family. (2) Emerging of new family folklore in the family. (3) Teaching family folklore to the stepfather, and teaching stepfather folklore to the family. (4) Developing trust between the members.

E. Integration and disintegration are at opposite ends of a continuum. Integration and disintegration is not an either/or proposition, it is a more-or-less quality found in step-families. The processes found in this study indicate movement toward integration or disintegration. The processes themselves are present more-or-less. Stepfathers engage in more-or-less enforcing, mothers go-between often or seldom, some stepfathers rarely engage in a great deal of friending, others often engage in small amounts of friending. (The continuum of integrating and disintegrating discipline is described in detail in Chapter 7.)

In Part III, the focus moves to friending. The outcome of friending is compared and contrasted with the outcome of unfriending. The effect of the special property of friending which is integrative undermining is presented.

Footnotes

1. Alvin Gouldner, in Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, (1954-1963), describes the avenues of control available to the successor in a management position in a factory. His work has served as a source for comparison to the stepfather in his role as successor. (p. 99 and elsewhere).

PART III

FINDINGS: THE FRIENDING FOCUS

Chapter 6

FRIENDING AND INTEGRATIVE UNDERMINING

Friending is the glue which holds the stepfather family together. It is only when all members of the family--marriage partners and children alike--become friends, that the family achieves true integration. A description of the friending process has been reserved for this point in my report because of its importance. Given enough time, friending solves most of the problem situations with which the preceding pages deal. Friending is a way out. It is crucial to the integration of the stepfather family. Families which seem unlikely candidates for integration manage to achieve unification with the help of a little friendship. For instance, families in which the spouses have diverse childrearing philosophies (their sentimental orders of child behavior do not match), or those where the conditions are not ideal for remarriage (undermining conditions are present), manage to become integrated when the family members act like friends toward one another. It may seem obvious to the reader that the family members must become friends in order to become integrated, but it is not always obvious to the marriage partners. Adults who enjoy life, and who are friends with other adults, when placed in a parental role suddenly become somber and joyless. They fall to using words and

phrases like, "obey," "respect," and "proper behavior" when talking about the household children. It is as if being a parent precludes having any fun. Other parents are able to relax and "make the best of it."

Integrative undermining is a power-balancing mechanism which is a special sub-process in friending. In integrative undermining, the stepfather becomes child champion. Stepfather and child align themselves against a benevolent mother, serving to equalize the power structure in the family.

Part 1 of Chapter 6 deals with the properties of the friending process and the outcomes of their use. To a lesser degree, the properties of unfriending are discussed. In the section on undermining conditions it is determined that some combinations of stepfathers and children and mothers run into more difficulty in the process of integration than others. The presence or absence of those conditions has a bearing on the amount of friending in the relationship between step-parent and child. Some of the outcomes of undermining conditions on friending are discussed, as well as the effect of friending on undermining conditions. The influence of peer support on stepparents, spouses and children is discussed in Part 1. At the close of Part 1, the general outcomes of friending and the influence on rule-maker-enforcer patterns is discussed. Part 2 covers integrative undermining.

PART 1

FRIENDING: THE WAY OUT

Coercive methods of child control are generally unavailable to the stepfather, because the mother assumes the role of child champion, and blocks the interaction between stepfather and child. In most cases, instead of taking over child management, the stepfather must go through a process of winning over the child. Norms for the group (a necessity for integration) are arrived at through mutual attraction rather than coercion. Norms are agreed upon by persons attracted to one another. Scott (1970) speaks of the interpersonal attraction as "the most important integrative bonds...linking group members " (p. 147). Scott was referring to the integrative factors in societies, but the comparison works for stepfather families. Because the stepfather joins the family in the role of outsider, it is possible to learn what works to make the discreet parts of the unit fit together to make a single unit, a new family. Therefore, it is possible to determine that the friending process which leads to interpersonal attraction between stepparent and child leads, in turn, to the formation of a new, cohesive unit, in which no member is left out.

Properties of Friending

Friending as used in the present study is a process engaged in by a person who can be counted on to be there when times are hard. Being a friend to a child entails more than making fun and going to the zoo. At the minimum point of participation, friending means for the child just having a man in the house--someone who looks like and smells like a man, and who acts like a man toward the mother and child. At the highest level, friending behavior accounts for dramatic improvement in the life of the child. Friending is mutually beneficial: being a friend leads to having a friend. Each friending property has its opposing unfriending property. They are opposite points on a continuum. For example, if financial help is a property of friending, then no financial help is a property of unfriending. To carry forward the continuum theme, a little money spent on the child is more friendly than no money. The timing of a stepfather's behavior may determine whether his act is ultimately friendly or not. A friendly act coming at the right time may have a strong impact, but a friendly act poorly timed can have a weak impact or a reverse effect. Some properties of friending are essential for a close relationship, others make friending fun. The specific properties are discussed in detail in a later section.

The properties of friending presented in this study are conceptual, and made up of a variety of behaviors.

Although presented separately, most of the properties are interrelated. Future studies on stepfathers may identify other properties of friending. Those outlined here are properties which emerged as important to the integration of the families under study. In general, friending is a group of behaviors which has the effect of winning-over the cooperation of the stepchild.

Winning-Over vs Taking-Over: A Comparison of Friending and Unfriending

Winning-over is a general property of friending; taking-over is a general property of unfriending. In winning-over, the outcome goal is friendship with the child, while the outcome goal of the take-over is child control. Both aim at discipline, but win-over combines cooperation and friendship to achieve direction of behavior, while take-over depends on coercive, forceful control methods only. Some families successfully employ both methods in concert.

Take-over occurs in the child-left-out pattern described in Chapter 4. The mother asks the stepfather to "take over" management of an unruly child whom she has tried and failed to control. Therefore, the mother's act is unfriendly to the child and the stepfather. To the child, the mother's message is, "I can't handle you and I'm going to turn you over to someone who can!" To the stepfather, her message

is, "You do the dirty work." In the take-over, the stepfather is presented in the beginning as a threat to the child. On the other hand, the stepfather who wins over the child demonstrates that he is "not so bad after all." Two examples from preceding chapters serve to illustrate take-over vs win-over. Take-over was requested of Hoyt by Eric's mother, Nola, in the child-left-out family. Hoyt used coercive means to control Eric, beating him with a belt. The outcome of the take-over was that Eric, although controlled, became "absent-minded," shy, and nervous. During the interview, Eric acted as if he was afraid of saying the wrong thing in front of his stepfather. When asked about the time he lived alone with his mother before the marriage, Eric's eyes lit up as he said, "I didn't mind living alone." When asked if he liked that better, he looked frightened and stopped smiling, saying, "I didn't mind." He wouldn't be more explicit (Eric, 2/19/76, p. 7). When asked what he liked least about his stepfather, Eric said, "His brown belt " (p. 8). Win-over, by contrast, in the integrated home of Evelyn and Earnest had a different outcome. Evelyn's child, Renee, was also a behavior problem to the mother. Evelyn had trouble managing Renee. Evelyn did not ask Earnest to "take over," but she welcomed his suggestions. Earnest first set about gaining Renee's confidence. Winning-over was not a simple matter in the case of Renee. Her initial impression of Earnest was that he was "weird." She didn't like Earnest's early disciplinary efforts, but was finally able to say,

"Now it seems okay " (Renee, 9/29/75, p. 6).

Winning-over and taking-over occasionally appear in concert. In this seemingly paradoxical situation, the stepfather uses coercive means to control the child's behavior, but at the same time attempt to gain the child's friendship in other ways. Guy (4/23/76) said that his mother "just couldn't handle me, I mean, she'd knock me around the room and like that, but she couldn't hurt me." Guy's mother remarried when Guy was five. "When my stepfather came along he really let me have it " (p. 1). At twenty-one, Guy said of his stepfather, "Oh, he's my buddy. We do things together, sports, bike rides, shows, everything." The stepfather tempered corporal punishment with efforts to win Guy's affection.

I hated him at first--for a long time. Everytime he'd sit next to my mother on the couch, I'd run and sit in between them.

When did you start feeling better about him?

When I was about six, I guess it was, he brought home this big Labrador dog to protect us when he was on the road. He was a traveling salesman. When I got that dog, everything started to change.

What do you mean?

Well, he gave me that dog, and he started doin' other stuff with me, and I started to realize he wasn't so bad after all. (p. 2).

Ameliorating the take-over by winning over behavior makes use of the classical pain-pleasure principle used to control children and rats. By the time Guy was twelve, "I finally learned to do the right thing." At twenty-one, Guy still lived at home, worked in his stepfather's store, and thought

the rule-making-and-enforcing for his half brother should be more strict. He thought his stepfather's disciplinary efforts in his own case were proper. Guy said of the discipline of his half brother that:

He gets away with murder. I mean, like I have this jar I keep change in, and I notice it's not getting any fuller, and then one day I hear this noise from downstairs, and my little brother is taking the money out of the jar. And my stepfather, he didn't do much--if it had been me, I really would have got it. But I think that's better. I mean, I got stopped (stealing) early, and he's just going to get into a lot of trouble when he grows up. Like when he's a teenager, if he steals, he'll go to jail! (p. 3).

Thomas Gordon (1970) says of the children who submit to heavy parental authority with submissiveness that they become dependent, and that as adults they "depend on external authority to control their behavior " (p. 158). Guy, who submitted to heavy parental authority agreed with his stepfather's approach, because they had become "buddies." Guy's stepfather used a combination of winning-over and taking-over techniques.

Specific Properties of Friending

The ten properties of friending have been divided into two groups, the five properties which make friending fun: spending time, timing, spending money, modeling and teaching. These are the enriching properties. Four properties are

essential for close friendship. They are leveling, trusting, accepting and liking. Coming through is a borderline property. Children have an intellectual appreciation of stepfathers who come through for them, but it doesn't make the child like the stepfather. Mothers, on the other hand, usually consider coming through the most essential of the friending properties.

Spending Time. The importance of the time dimension in the integration of the stepfather family is emphasized throughout this report. Time is essential to integration: time to know, time to trust, time to consolidate values. The first two properties of friending round out the time dimension. Spending time refers to the hours or minutes of the day the stepfather spends with the child. Timing has to do with the appropriateness of an act when placed on the over-time continuum. Put more simply, what is an appropriately friendly act in August, may have reduced a child to tears in June.

Spending time can be placed on both a quantity and a quality continuum. Floyd, of the chaos household, rarely spoke to his stepchildren, and rarely spent time with them. Floyd avoided his stepchildren. Avoiding is the opposing property to spending time. Floyd's temporal contributions were low in quality and quantity. Ed (11/20/75), who could be placed at the other end of the continuum, spent a great deal of time alone with his stepson, Kent, teaching him any

number of manly skills. Ed made it clear that he enjoyed the company of his stepson. Ed's temporal contributions were high quality and high quantity. Studies of children whose father is absent from the home (no time spent) demonstrate that fatherless children behave differently from those with a father. Boys become less aggressive (Billler, 1968a, 1968b) and girls have difficulty relating to males when the girls reach adolescence (Hetherington, 1972). The loss of a father is also related to diminished school performance:

Loss of father seems specifically to diminish mathematical skills in sons....Under some circumstances, it also lowers quantitative skills in daughters. Father loss is associated with difficulty in analytic tasks requiring sorting out misleading cues, with poor performance on nonverbal tasks and verbal comprehension, and with low motivation to achieve in mechanical skills. (Lynn, 1974, p. 280).

Children with a stepfather, on the other hand, are found to be matched in mental health and school achievement with children from intact homes:

Stepchildren view themselves as being just as happy as natural children, and were found to be successful and as achieving as natural children. (Bohannon, 1975, p. 4).

Floyd of the chaos home spent the minimum amount of time, but his being there made a difference. Forrest, Floyd's stepson, remembers that as a child after his father died, he was ashamed of being fatherless, and he tried to hide the fact from his schoolmates. Although his stepfather, Floyd's participation in the household was minimal, Forrest reported an improvement in the climate of the household after Floyd

moved in. Forrest mentioned, in particular, that his mother didn't go out drinking every night after she and Floyd were married (p. 4). Amy (11/19/76), the college-aged stepdaughter, had little use for Floyd, but she agreed that her mother spent more time at home. Before Floyd moved in, Amy, then thirteen, was having trouble at school. She was twice charged with assault and battery after beating up schoolmates, and her grades were failing. She was placed in special classes and became a top student. Her behavior changed, and she stopped getting into fist fights. Amy gave Floyd no credit for her success, but the improvement in her life coincided with the acquisition of a stepfather. Forrest thought Floyd was a "nice guy," but the time spent by Floyd was insufficient to win over his stepdaughter.

The crucial factor in spending high-quality time with stepchildren is the stepfather's intent to win-over the child. Spending high-quality time is a learned skill. The stepfather must expend some effort to determine what turns out to be a good time from the point of view of the child. A comparison of two stepfathers makes this point clear. Errol (9/11/75), was an experienced father, but he didn't like his stepdaughter and made little effort to win her over. Their time together was a shambles of shouting and whining. Errol constantly compared his stepdaughter with his own children, and found her less attractive. Justin (3/4/75) had no parenting experience, and had considerable difficulty learning to have good times with his stepsons. However, he was willing to make the

effort to win-over the boys. When Justin first moved in with Chloe, he had in mind being a perfect father to Chloe's boys, Garth and Ethan. Justin gave the boys many hours a day, but he expected to change their behavior radically. When they didn't behave as he wished, he didn't punish them openly, instead, he teased them:

I didn't realize how much hostility I had, and that was my way of letting it out.

Hostility about what?

Against the boys, their resentment, their attachment to their father--I had a hard time with that.
(p. 4).

Later Justin spent less time with the boys. He eased up on his demands, and started treating Garth, nine, as a pal. Justin managed to win-over Garth. Ethan, at six, was more of a problem, but Justin was determined to keep trying to make his time with the boys high-quality time. Spending time with a child demonstrates to the child a desire to be with him, but the quality of the time depends on the attitude of the participants toward one another.

Stepfathers in the most integrated homes paid the step-child the supreme compliment of spending time with them for pleasure. Fred (6/7/75) went fishing and camping with his stepsons. He took them to the print shop where he worked from the time they were quite small. Gene (11/5/75) often played chess with his stepdaughter, Essie. When Essie's mother was in the last stages of pregnancy and ungainly with Gene's baby, Gene took Essie bike riding, and thrilled her

with a trip to the dump. High-quality and high-quantity time spent with a stepfather wins over the child and leads to integration.

Timing. A well-placed act of friendship makes a memorable impression on a stepchild, but an attempt to achieve a close relationship before the child is ready can meet with failure. Good timing can raise a child's self-esteem, poor timing can lead to mutual rejection. It is unlikely that one incident can make or break a stepfamily, but certain events are salient. Most stepfather families recall bits of history which set the tone for the relationship between step-parent and child, or turned the tide. Poor timing constitutes unfriending. Friending attempts which are out of sync with the child's readiness can have the end result of disintegration. In the examples below, an offer of friendship, poorly timed, resulted in mutual rejection. Emil (3/13/76) was in favor of his mother's marriage to Harry. Emil's father was a cripple, and Emil hoped that Harry would do the father-son things with him which his own father had been unable to do. Harry asked Emil if he wanted to play baseball, but that was one sport in which Emil was not interested. Rejected in this, Harry made no further effort to do "manly" things with Emil. When Floyd first moved in with Polly, he made an attempt to be friends with Amy. Floyd grew up in a cattle town in Canada, and when the horse show

came to town, he assumed that it would be as thrilling for Amy as the rodeo had been for him when he was a lad. Floyd bought tickets for the best seats at the Cow Palace, but neglected to tell Amy until two days before the event. By that time she had a date which she didn't want to break. Thwarted, Floyd gave up trying to be Amy's friend (Polly, 9/25/75, p. 6). Most stepfathers are willing to overlook initial rejection and give it another try. Emery's early attempts to be friends with Joey were disappointing. Emery (6/5/75) used the same teasing approach on three-year-old Joey which had delighted his own children. Joey burst into tears. But Emery was willing to keep trying. Time is needed to learn proper timing.

Timing a moment of support when a child is in difficulty can change the child's attitude toward a stepfather. A part of friending is saying the right thing at the right time to bolster a child's self-esteem; in other words, good timing. Rose, twelve, sometimes found her stepfather too strict. Before the interview, she said to a neighbor, "I wonder if I'll be able to say what I think in front of my (step) father." Rose was a little stiff with her stepfather when the interview began. During the conversation, Rose's mother described a girlfriend of Rose's as "sweet." Rose divulged that the girl, once Rose's closest friend, now preferred another girl. Rose was dejected over the loss of this friend whom Rose considered "prettier" than herself. The stepfather, Karl, disagreed. He said he thought Rose

was "prettier, more tractable, sweeter; she is able to think better, and is more sophisticated." Rose said with wonder, "Do you really think so?" and looked at her stepfather in a most affectionate way (Rose, 11/11/75, p. 7). Karl's timing had been perfect. There was a visible change in Rose's attitude. She sat straighter, and gazed fondly at her stepfather during the remainder of the interview. Karl's well-timed remark won Rose over and aided integration of the family. Rose's stepfather was no less strict, but his rules has been tempered with friending.

Spending Money. Children appreciate the symbolic expression of good will prompting a small introductory gift presented by the stepfather, but they also like material gain for its own sake. If things are going well, children are able to count possessions as an added blessing. If things are going poorly between stepparent and child, but the physical advantages are present, children count this as a mediating circumstance. If the relationship between stepparent and child is a poor one, and there is no financial gain, children find this condition unforgivable. The children in this study were practical in their attitude about money, and at least as acquisitive as adults. Stinting is the unfriending property which opposes spending money.

The living standard of mother and child often improves when the stepfather joins the family. In this study, several

children talked about the material gain that having a stepfather brought. Children displayed goods given them by their stepfather, or they talked directly about improved conditions. Kent proudly showed off his new cross-country bike (11/20/75). Garth and Ethan carried their new model animals into the living room to demonstrate the progress they had made in putting them together (3/4/76).

Teenagers have particular difficulty adjusting to a step-relationship. When they discussed their likes and dislikes, their complaints and plaudits are often linked to money. Milo was that rare adolescent who liked his stepfather. When asked about the advantages in his new relationship, Milo expressed delight over his appointments. He had private quarters with bath on the lower level of the house, and his own outside entrance. He had a stereo, color TV with an electronic basketball game, and he had a water bed (Milo, 12/11/75, p. 1). Lorraine, nineteen, spoke resentfully of much of her stepfather's behavior, but she was grateful to him for financing her college career (Lorraine, 1/15/76).

When their living standard did not improve after their mother's remarriage, teenagers complained bitterly. Teenagers considered a stepfather's unwillingness to spend money on them as an act of unfrinding. Ruby was a grown woman when I talked with her, but she still resented the man her mother married when Ruby was thirteen. One of her chief complaints was the way her stepfather, Leonard, stinted

when it came to spending money. He expected Ruby's mother to pay half the household expenses, and the cost of her daughter's schooling as well. Leonard brought two daughters of his own to the marriage. He took his own daughters to town to shop for clothes, and always bought the most expensive items. He never took Ruby and her sisters. Years later, Ruby still talked about the unfairness of it. (Ruby, 11/6/75). Amy, eighteen, who lived in the chaos home, always believed that if her mother remarried, there would be more money in the house. Amy's impression was that her stepfather, Floyd, did not pay his fair share. The spouses did not pool their wages, so Amy could determine how the money was spent. Floyd paid for the household liquor, and the spouse outings. He bought a freezer and new drapes, but Amy said, "That's not much in four years " (11/19/76, p. 4). Money spent made a good relationship better; lack of it made a poor relationship worse. An introductory gift of a small trinket made a memorable first impression which children could recall years later. In fine, stepfathers can't buy the love of a stepchild, but they can make a down payment.

Modeling. Like all friending, modeling is mutually beneficial: the child who models his behavior after a stepfather flatters the model. When the child begins to pattern his behavior after that of his stepfather, it works to win

over the stepfather. The opposing property is belittling. The child who is belittled does not model the stepfather. The child who doesn't model the stepfather, belittles the stepfather's modeling. Biological identification is absent in step-relationships; social identification becomes paramount. In the present study, every stepfather who recounted some way in which the stepchild was "just like me," beamed as he said it. The benefit to the child in modeling is that he has a model to work from. A child without a man in the home has no such model available on a day-to-day basis. The man of the house serves as a mate for the mother, usually provides some income, and shares, in some way, in child-rearing. He is essential in the sex role identification of male and female children. In the section on spending time, some of the disadvantages of having no man about the house are touched on. David Lynn (1974) writes about the importance of the father in sex role development:

Still other experts emphasize the importance of a masculine model in the home, not only for the boy's sex-role development, but for the girl's as well. We have seen that the father can influence the feminine development of his daughter and serve as a model of what a man is like. (p. 255).

Modeling is related to the time-spent property of friending, and it is one form of teaching. The child must spend time with a man to learn about men, and in so doing, the child learns that a "father" is expected to spend time with children. The stepfather can serve as a model just as well as a biological father can. The stepfather serves as a social

father. From two parents the child learns the politics of family life. By watching the man and woman react, the child learns about male-female relationships. The child with only one parent has no chance to learn of the negotiations, the pressures, counterpressures, and compromises between spouses. The child with one parent can't learn to manipulate his environment by working one parent against the other. In the present study, girls learned to act like girls and boys like boys with some help from stepfathers. The evidence was both reported and observed. Rose (11/11/75), the stepdaughter of Karl, was twelve. Heather (2/19/76), the biological daughter of Hoyt, was eleven-and-a-half, and Renee (2/19/75), the stepdaughter of Earnest, was eleven. These three girls acted like pre-adolescent girls with their fathers. Without a history, it would not have been possible to pick out the stepdaughters from the daughters. They all used familiar young-girl-talking-to-daddy gestures: they cocked their heads, looked sidelong, and pouted a little. Virginia said of the attitude of her daughter toward Gene, the stepfather, that Essie had, "If you go along with Freud's theory, a real Electra Complex." Virginia gave birth to Gene's baby in December of 1975, and Essie, who was eleven, doted on the child. Virginia said, "She really has gotten into the little mother role, and I think she'd like to be a little wife " (4/12/76, p. 2). Not all girls were able to relate to a stepfather in this way. The conditions for unfriending between girls and stepfathers are discussed in a later section.

Boys learned manly ways from their stepfathers. Ivan (3/11/76) was attentive to his mother, especially when his stepfather was out of town on business. Ivan asked Gail if she was warm enough, and checked the locks on the doors and windows before retiring. Gail said this was behavior Ivan had learned from watching his stepfather's considerate treatment of her. Children often assume the career and hobby interests of their stepfathers. Guy (4/23/76) wanted to own a chain of stores like his stepfather. Jules (6/7/75) wanted to be a printer like his stepfather, but his brother Jim couldn't decide whether he should be a printer or a boat captain like his biological father. Milo (12/11/75) became interested in collecting antique comic books under the influence of his first stepfather, Fernand. Milo hadn't seen Fernand for four years, but the essence of the man lived on--Milo had a huge "about 700" collection of comic books. Zane (9/23/75) and Ollie after three years were not too close, but Zane said "it's getting better." His tone was warm, and his look was one of pride when he told me Ollie was beginning to see him as a "role model." Ollie became interested in old movies like Zane, and his career ambition was to be a broadcaster like Zane. Zane measured the closeness between his stepson and himself by how much the lad was modeling himself after his stepfather. In the most integrated families, mothers encouraged modeling. They often gave examples of child behavior which were "just like" that of the stepfather.

Mothers contribute to the formation of a negative role

model when they belittle the stepfather. To recall the communication patterns, the stepfather who is kept from the child by the mother is defined by the child as (a) too dangerous to trust or (b) a man who is controlled by the mother and therefore, not masterful. Clearly, a man who is dangerous or not masterful makes a poor model. Amy of the chaos home had the same complaints about Floyd as her mother had. Since Amy and Floyd didn't speak, Amy learned about Floyd from watching her mother interact with him. The mother in the child-left-out home defines the stepfather as dangerous when she turns over her child for punishment. The model for the boy who is abusively punished can fill the child with fear causing him to become dependent. On the other hand, the evidence from other studies shows that the parents of battered children were battered themselves as children (Lynn, 1970). The children either reject the model and become dependent, or accept the model and become batterers. The fathers in the present study who used heavy corporal punishment had had the same treatment themselves as children. When children did not model themselves after their stepfather, the stepfather reacted negatively. A man in the stepparent class (11/20/75) said that he liked his ten-year-old stepson, but didn't get along well with the six-year-old, about whom he said, "He's not like us--he doesn't fit in so well." The stepfather said he would like to send the younger boy back to his biological father (p. 2). Belittling, the opposing property to modeling, was complained of mostly by teenagers, and discussed in

the section on conditions for friending and unfriending.

In sum: The child wins over the stepfather when he can perceive that he is the child's model. The mother contributes to the child's perceived role of the stepfather by her interaction with her spouse, by pointing out similarities or differences in man and child, and by her assignment of the stepfather as disciplinarian. Stepfathers react negatively to the child who does not use them as a model.

Teaching. Modeling is often an unconscious process. Teaching, on the other hand, is a sentient effort to impart knowledge. Teaching and modeling are the core of discipline. Teaching a child is what discipline is all about. To recall a statement from Chapter 3, "The process of integration between stepfather and stepchild often begins with the stepparent teaching something to the child." When the stepparent teaches the child, the two can enjoy a parent-child situation without consciously focusing on their relationship to one another. Maddox (1975) agrees:

Teaching a stepchild something may be one of the best ways for a stepparent to reach a stepchild, for it allows the stepparent to display qualities he or she values as a person without involving an artificial assumption of parental behavior.
(p. 31).

Showing a child how to replace a light socket does not require a father-daughter situation; it requires only an adult who knows how, and a child who wants to learn. The outcome for

both can be enhanced self-esteem. The stepparent who teaches the child something useful can feel like a "good guy." The child who learns a new skill can enjoy a feeling of mastery. When asked in what ways the stepfather had made himself valuable to the child, parents and children talked about what the stepfather had taught the child. Zane (9/9/75) taught Ollie to ride a bike when others had tried to teach him and failed. Fred (6/7/75) taught his stepson to fish, camp, build a cabin, and work around the print shop. Even Eric of the child-left-out family said what he liked about his stepfather was that, "He helps me with stuff, and he shows me how things work " (2/19/76, p. 9). Eric smiled and looked excited when he said this, and his stepfather looked at him fondly. The friending process of teaching is often the beginning of integration, and modeling is one way in which the child can win over the stepparent.

The unfriending process which opposes teaching is supervision. An adult who supervises a child watches him to see if he does anything wrong, or follows him around to see if he has done his assigned duties properly. Teaching is showing someone how to do something, supervision is showing someone how they cannot be trusted to do something.¹

Coming Through. The friending property of coming through has to do with reliability--the stepfather can be counted on when times are tough to come through for the child. The

unfriending stepfather fails to come through. Coming through can be a high profile act such as helping a hyperkinetic boy get off medication, or a low profile act: playing child advocate in a family dispute. Coming through is the property which more than any other wins over the child's mother. A stepfather may commit many acts of unfriending, but if, when emergency strikes, he is there to help out, the mother is more likely to overlook his shortcomings in child management. Carolyn (10/24/75) said that Greg was too strict. She disapproved of much of his child management. Nevertheless, she thought he was a valuable father to her children because he could always be counted on in times of trouble. For instance, when a teenage son had a brush with the law, Greg's response was to come to the aid of the boy:

In times of trouble, Greg was great. When Arthur was arrested for having an open bottle in the car, Greg was on the phone to his lawyer immediately.
(p. 6).

Coming through is appreciated retrospectively by grown stepchildren. As they recall the experience of being a stepchild, they relate coming through instances. Erica (2/15/76) now grown, said:

As much as I used to hate him sometimes, he was always there to help you out of a jam if you needed it. And I did need it.
(p. 1).

When the stepfather comes through for the child he demonstrates that he can be counted on to be child champion in times of stress.

The properties of friending are integrated in such a way that the processes outlined above do not work in forming a close friendship without the following four properties. The properties which follow, namely leveling, trusting, accepting, and liking, are essential for the formation of an intimate friendship between stepfather and child. Teaching gets things started, and high quality time is needed to get acquainted, but time spent without leveling, or liking between stepparent and child, or teaching without trusting and accepting does not work to make the pair close friends. Coming through is not included in the following group of four because although it is valued by the child, it does not necessarily make the child like the stepfather, and liking is essential for friendship.

Leveling is essential to a close, friendly relationship between stepfather and child; it is also the solid ground upon which discipline can be based. Leveling is speaking the truth about what one feels, thinks and wants. Concealing is the opposing process. The stepfather who tries to conceal his feelings from the child, whether they are so-called "good" feelings of joy, love or hunger; or "bad" feelings of anger, frustration or fear, is not allowing the child to know him. He is also giving the child the impression that it is not okay to talk about such feelings, or perhaps even have them. Of the communication theorists, Virginia

Satir (1972) talks most about the communication of feelings. She says about anger, "It's not a vice, it is a respectable human emotion that can be used in an emergency." Satir goes on to say about pretending not to be angry:

If an individual wants to qualify as being a Good Person (and who doesn't?), he will try to hold in his occasional feelings of anger. He doesn't fool anybody, though. Have you ever seen anyone, obviously angry, but trying to talk as if he were not? His muscles tighten, his lips go tight, his breathing gets choppy, his skin color changes, his eyelids tighten; sometimes he'll even puff up.
(p. 102).

Feelings can't be hidden, because communication is non-verbal as well as verbal. Jackson (1967) maintained that all behavior is communication, and that since there is no such thing as non-behavior, "it follows that no matter how one may try, one can not not communicate " (p. 49). Therefore, a stepfather who tries to hide how he really feels, confuses a child or creates an area of life which is closed to discussion. The stepfather who pretends not be angry cannot say what he is angry about. In order to change a child's behavior, the stepfather must make it clear to the child about what behavior he wants changed and what he wants it changed to. Justin (3/4/76) engaged in concealing. He had difficulty relating to his stepchildren when he first moved in, because he did not level with them when he was angry. Instead of telling the boys honestly when he didn't like something they did, he concealed the way he felt. Because he was angry, he teased them. The boys were confused by his approach. Greg (12/11/75) on the other hand, leveled with

Milo. He did little rule-making-and-enforcing, but he and Milo's mother, Georgia, had one rule about Greg's reaction to Milo's behavior. If Milo annoyed him, Greg must tell Milo directly, and not go through Georgia. Therefore, when Milo's ball-bouncing in the house bothered him, Greg told Milo that it did, and Milo stopped. When I asked Milo what he liked least about Greg, it took him a while to think of something:

There's one little thing, but it isn't really important. Sometimes when we're on the boat, he snaps at me when I don't do things right. But you see, on a boat you have to move fast, and I'm really in the wrong. As I said, it's unimportant.
(p. 4).

Another stepfather, Nivan (5/1/76), spent time playing with his wife, Belle's, two children, showing them how to play ball, and climb hills, but after a day's work he was sometimes too tired for such sport:

The kids got mad, you know, because he wouldn't play with them, but he just told them all he had to do around the farm, and that he was tired. The next morning they were up early wanting to help him with the milking.
(p. 2).

The three examples above demonstrate that leveling was a better basis for discipline than the unfriending process of concealing. Evasiveness about feelings is a distancing mechanism. The stepfather of Eleanor, mentioned in Chapter 3, practiced evasiveness in the area of affection. To repeat Eleanor's remarks:

It was clear to me that he preferred his own children, but he would never admit it. That caused me a lot of trouble in life: I would have gotten along a lot better if only he had been open about his preferences. (3/10/76, p. 1).

When Eleanor's stepfather "would never admit" how he felt, he cut off conversation with her about his preferences. She could not then tell him how she felt. The outcome was disintegrative social distance: there was an area of their lives which they could not discuss, the vital area of how they felt about each other.

Leveling in the stepfather-child relationship can be considered as (1) essential for the development of a close friendship, and (2) a sound basis for discipline. The foundation of trust is leveling. The stepfather who is honest in what he says can be relied on in other areas. The stepfather who conceals his feelings creates social distance between himself and the stepchild, and cannot be trusted.

Trusting. No rational person places implicit trust in another on sight. Stepfather and child are no exception to this rule. It is only after they have had the experience of one another's company over time, that doubts can fade. Trusting develops when the parties level with each other, and when each can be counted on to do what is promised. The opposing process is doubting.

In the present study, stepfathers and children described

the slow process of developing trust. Rose (11/11/75) thought her stepfather looked "dirty" (read mean), and he in turn thought she was a "brat," but in time they began to think better of one another. Emery (6/5/75) said Joey didn't know how to take his teasing, but "Then he found out I never treated him bad " (p. 3). Dale (3/11/76) was sometimes harsh with his stepsons, but he never broke promises, and little-by-little, they learned they could count on what he said. Rules and regulations must make sense to the child, or he will not trust the judgment of the stepfather. Erik Erikson (1963) in his well-known book, Childhood and Society, talks about the development of trust in the child:

Parents must not only have certain ways of guiding by prohibition and permission; they must also be able to represent to the child a deep, an almost somatic conviction that there is a meaning to what they are doing. Ultimately, children become neurotic not from frustrations, but from the lack or loss of societal meaning in these frustrations.
(p. 249).

In stepchildren, trusting the rules of the stepfather is doubly difficult because the children have other standards to measure them by: the rules of the biological father, and the rules of the single mother. Stepchildren often tell a friend whose mother is remarrying that things will change and there will be a "lot of new rules."

The process opposing trusting is doubting. Justin (3/4/76) doubted his stepsons, and thought he could not trust them to complete the tasks he assigned them. After a year-and-a-half, he said of the older child, "I realized

that, hey, I can really count on Garth " (p. 5). Prolonged doubting precludes integration. The stepfather who is doubted for too long a time gives up. The stepchild who is doubted becomes resentful. Theo (5/12/76) was twelve when his mother remarried:

I was a good kid, obeyed the rules and all that, but I never did anything to please him. I mean, we get along okay now, we have sort of a working relationship. For instance, I went over to my stepfather's shop the other day to change the oil in my car, and he stood around and told me I wasn't doing it right. I mean, here I am, thirty-five years old, a scientist, and yet, he stands there and tells me how to change the oil in my car!
(p. 1).

Trust alone does not determine the closeness of a step-relationship, but when it is not present, a real friendship cannot develop. When the stepfather trusts the child and is trusted by him, there is a good chance that they can win each other over. To be integrative, trust must be reciprocal.

Accepting. Integration requires equal status for all members. The child, to have a sense of equality, must feel accepted as a person in his own right, not as an item to be transformed to meet adult standards. One of the major points of this study is that abrupt intensified attempts by the stepfather to change child behavior are disintegrative. The stepfather who accepts the total child, including his undesirable behavior, is less inclined to attempt rapid, radical changes

of behavior. In the most integrated families, the stepfather accepts the child's faults as well as his virtues as a matter of course. All stepfathers want to change some behavior in the child, but in integrated families, the essential character of the child is considered acceptable to the stepfather. The process opposing accepting is rejecting. Adam (6/4/75) understood why four-year-old Rupert told him to get out of Adelaide's bed. Adelaide said of her husband, Adam, "He could recall his own oedipal period." In spite of Rupert's rejection of him, when Rupert woke screaming after dreaming about a monster:

Adam would go in and hold him, and tell Rupert that he was going to be around, and that he would take care of him, and not let any monster or anything else hurt him. He really made points with Rupert when he did that.

(p. 3)

Adam accepted Rupert's jealousy and his fear after a nightmare. He did not tell Rupert to be brave, he told him he would take care of him. Nivan (5/1/75) was always big for his age, so it was easy for him to understand why older boys tried to pick fights with his oversized stepson, Myron. When Myron got in trouble with the neighborhood mothers because he won the fights, Nivan simply said it was the same when he was a child. Accepting the responsibility for child care is not the same thing as accepting the child. However, some men who approached the step-relationship with a sense of duty, were able to achieve a quality of pleasure in time. The unfriending opposite of accepting is rejecting. Zane

(9/23/75) and his stepson Ollie rejected certain facets of one another's behavior. Zane was used to having heart-to-heart talks with his own children, but Ollie was not accustomed to this kind of interaction. According to Ollie's mother:

Zane tried, but Ollie turns away, and may even pick up a toy. Then Zane, having been rejected, doesn't try anymore.

(p. 3).

Errol (9/11/75) did not accept Carlo who "whined." At the time of the interview (3/13/76) Harry said he had hoped for a closer relationship with his stepson, but the two never looked at each other. Harry couldn't even accept Emil's dog, which he called "stupid." The child who is accepted is more willing to accept the stepfather. Accepting, like other friending properties, is mutually beneficial and integrating.

Liking. Liking can be initial or terminal; it is both a property and an outcome of friending. Occasionally, liking does not occur at all, in which event the family does not become integrated. When the stepfather likes the child from the beginning, it makes the work of adjustment easier to take. When liking is both initial and mutual, the pull toward integration is stronger. Liking is not a panacea, however, and the period of one-and-a-half to two years is still required to complete the adjustment of bringing a new partner into the family. Whether liking is initial or terminal, when the

other properties of friending are present, liking is also present. When the other properties are missing, liking is not present. Although Floyd (7/12/75) told me he liked Amy, her impression was that he didn't, because the properties of friending were absent. Floyd said the word "like" to me but not to Amy. He did not praise Amy to me, only belittled her. His word "like" had no meaning for her, because he did not behave as if he liked her. Initial liking was considered to be so important by two of the stepfathers that they said they would not have entered a stepmarriage if they had not liked the child. Other stepfathers said there was no such thing as instant love, and were willing to wait and work. There were integrated families in both groups. Therefore, initial liking was not necessary for integration. Initial liking can be undermined by harsh discipline. It can be converted to the opposing process of disliking.

To reiterate: (1) Liking can be initial or terminal. (2) Initial liking is not necessary for integration. (3) Initial liking can be sabotaged by disintegrating discipline.

Summary of Friending Properties

In integrated families, most of the friending properties are present. The greatest variation is in spending money. The stepfather in the integrated house brings in money, and buys gifts, but the mother often contributes too, and so does

the biological father. The stepfather is less often the sole support. The outcome of friending is mutual attraction, a necessity for integration in a stepfather home. The properties of friending can be divided into those which enrich the relationship and those essential for the establishment of intimate friendship. The enriching properties, also necessary, are not effective without the essential properties. The enriching properties are: (1) spending time, especially high-quality time; (2) timing, doing the right thing at the right time to enhance the child's self-esteem; (3) spending money, enriching the relationship in a material way; (4) modeling, a way for the stepchild to win over the stepfather; (5) teaching, often beginning the process of integration; (6) coming through, reliability in a crisis. Coming through is a borderline property. The mother considers it essential behavior in the stepfather, the child thinks it's important intellectually: something he appreciates as an adult looking back. The essential properties which affect the other properties, and are needed for close friendship are (7) leveling, essential for friendship, and a basis for discipline; (8) trusting, a property which must be reciprocal; (9) accepting, awarding equal status to the child; and (10) liking, an outcome of the other properties, and a property of itself. Initial liking is no guarantee of future integration.

For each friending property, its opposite unfriending property is found on the antipodal point of continuum. Like

the processes of friending, those which constitute unfriending are interrelated. Therefore, a stepfather who doubts that a child can be trusted to complete an assigned task, supervises the work. A stepfather who fails to come through for the child in times of trouble, is not trusted by the child. Stepfather and child who conceal their feelings are avoiding, or rejecting one another, and almost certainly dislike one another. A stepfather who is stinting of money or time is engaged in disintegrating processes. Knowing can overcome poor timing, but belittling is no way to make friends. Unfriending contributes to disintegrating discipline.

A supporting process of integrative discipline is friending. If the stepfather does not soften his rule-making-and-enforcing with friending, the family does not become integrated. In the following section, the conditions which promote or inhibit friending are discussed.

Conditions for Friending or Unfriending

Sentimental Order and Child Status

In the main, the sentimental order of the family members dictates whether the role of father-figure and child-manager is consistent with child-stepfather friending. A related determining factor is the status of the child in the home. In families where the child is considered a high

status member, the stepfather is more willing to work on a friending approach; when the child is a low status member, the reverse is true. If obedience of children is the first priority in the house, then friending is a lower priority goal for the family. The timing of the marriage, and the age of the child have a bearing on the stepfather-child interaction. When the child is a teenager, friending becomes extremely difficult. Management experience helps to make a stepfather aware of the value of friending in controlling behavior. A lack of experience with children, however, can leave a stepfather feeling too insecure about his role to relax and play. The mother's perception of the stepfather as marriage partner and management partner--her sentimental order for the role--either abets or aborts friending behavior on the part of the stepfather. This section deals with the conditions which stimulate or inhibit the friending process.

The father-figure can be a man who has fun with a child, or a man who makes it mind, or he can be both according to the sentimental view of the role which the parents have formed from their own experience. Some stepparents and parents think that making friends prior to and in concert with rules and enforcement of rules is unnecessary. Theo's stepfather had been raised in a strict authoritarian home, and he treated his stepson as he had been treated. "He never abused me," said Theo, "but on the other hand, he never gave me the feeling he liked me " (5/12/75, p. 1). A teacher in a step-parent class, who was herself a stepmother, said that step-

parents should take over full child management duties from the first: "Discipline comes first, Love comes after " (10/20/75, p. 1). Viola (12/4/75) also a stepmother, agreed. Other parents and stepparents held the opposite view, and like Earnest (9/29/75) moved very slowly.

The status of the child in the home is largely determined by the sentimental order of the parents. For those who consider children high-status individuals, friendship can be its own reward. Errol (9/11/75) didn't make the effort to become a friend to Carla because, "I don't think most men care that much about children not their own " (p. 5). Stepchildren to him were not worth the time and effort needed for friending. Nivan (5/1/76) on the other hand, held Belle's children in high esteem. "Nivan just loves kids, and he couldn't have any of his own--he's just crazy about those kids " (p. 1). Because Nivan enjoyed the company of the children, and was unable to produce his own, his stepchildren had the highest-possible status position in his home.

Timing and Experience

The timing of the marriage and past experience have a bearing on the stepfather's view of children as high-status or low-status family members. A middle-aged stepfather looks upon childrearing with less joy than a younger man, especially if he has already brought up children of his own. Experience

with children is helpful to stepfathers in allowing them to engage in friending if the experience was good, and if they are not (as discussed in Chapter 3) withholding friendship with a stepchild because they feel it would constitute disloyalty to a biological child. Harry (2/10/76) had had "too much" experience. For him, the timing of the marriage was off. At 59, he had reared three children of his own, and he was weary of the task. Alice Rossi (1971) points out that parents greet each successive child with ever decreasing enthusiasm:

Last-born children may experience not only less verbal stimulation from the parents than first-born children, but also less prompt and enthusiastic response to their demands--from feeding and diaper change as infants to requests for stories read at three or a college education at eighteen--simply because the parents experience less intense gratification from the parent role with the third child than they did with the first.
(p. 339).

When I asked Harry if he did any father-son things with Emil, he told me that he was forty-seven years older than Emil, and a "bit old to play the father." Emil, he told me, had other "father-figures." He was friendly with the owner of a nearby stable, and Harry's grown son sometimes took Emil on outings. Harry did not, however, feel he was too old to enforce rules; he engaged in making and enforcing rules with an enthusiasm which Emil was unaccustomed to. Emil said, "All of a sudden, everything I did was wrong " (p. 6). Harry thought he was too old to engage in friending activities with Emil, but he expected to be a disciplinarian. Emil was

resentful and uncooperative. The home was not integrated. Emil, at thirteen, said he planned to "ride with the punches" until he was eighteen and could leave.

When Jason (3/4/76) met Chloe, the timing couldn't have been better. At thirty-seven, Jason realized all that he had missed in life. "I was looking for a woman with a pretty smile and two kids " (p. 4). Problems emerged when his lack of experience in dealing with children left him unsure of what was expected of him, and what he expected of himself. Jason thought a man who had had the experience of being a father would have had a much easier time as a stepfather. He said that he was not attracted to Chloe's children as real boys but as the answer to an "image." Chloe thought Jason had a distorted idea of what a father-child interaction should be. She said he had, "this idea that a father talks down to a child--if he would only talk to them as people!" Roy (11/6/75) was also unclear about what to expect of a four-year-old stepson, because he was childless, and lacked knowledge of such matters. Earnest (9/29/75) on the other hand, was also childless, but he found the experience of caring for his younger brothers and sisters a help when he became a stepfather.

The related experience of management of people is helpful in the stepfather role. Karl (11/11/75) and Ed (11/20/75) found their military backgrounds helpful in managing their stepchildren. Both talked about people "responding" to kind treatment, and both said they understood the

importance of "accepting" the child as it was. Karl and Ed both engaged in friending with their stepchildren, and the homes became integrated. The exception was Ed's teenage stepdaughter.

Teenage: A Special Problem. Teenage stepdaughters are not only resistant to discipline, they are resistant to friending from a stepfather as well. No teenage girl in this study was friendly with her stepfather.² Adolescent stepsons fair only slightly better. Only two stepsons in the present study did not have a serious break with their stepfathers during the teen years. Stepsons and daughters alike resented the rule-making-and-enforcing efforts of stepfathers. Stepfathers complained that the rules weren't obeyed. Stepfathers and teenagers belittled one another. Male stepchildren, especially, complained bitterly that everything they did was "wrong" in the eyes of the stepfather. Friending was a factor in the maintenance of a good relationship in the case of Milo (12/11/75) and Guy (4/23/76). Guy's stepfather was a strict disciplinarian, but he tempered rule-enforcement with friending. Milo's stepfather, Greg, did not take an active disciplinary role in Milo's life, only leveling when he was annoyed at Milo's behavior. Milo had a measure of freedom, and a measure of friending. The contrast between the two stepfathers, Greg and Harry, is striking. Greg, too, was middle-aged and less than enthusiastic about childrearing, but he did not belittle Milo as Harry did Emil.

Milo liked his stepfather situation, Emil did not.

Problems between teenagers and adults in stepfather families is consistent with the literature on intact families. Ravenscroft (1974) in "Normal Family Regression at Adolescence" speaks of the emotional impact for the whole family when children reach adolescence. Ravenscroft maintains that all family members must rework the old conflicts which they experienced as teenagers. Ralph Keyes (1976) writes of the trauma of high school experiences. He is quoted by Knoblauch as saying:

A vicious cycle develops in the family. When the kids go to high school, it brings back memories for the parents of how difficult it was for them. They don't want to revive those memories for themselves, so they unconsciously urge the kids to spend more time with their peers, away from the adults.

(p. 3).

The psychoanalytical literature is replete with accounts of the normal schism which develops between the teenage girl and her biological father. Lidz (1968) says of the resolution of the oedipal conflict between father and daughter:

...just prior to the onset of puberty or early in adolescence she turns from her father and her father turns away from her. It usually constitutes the primary renunciation of her attachment to her father rather than a repeat performance.

(p. 320).

It is logical to assume that the separation between teenage girls and stepfathers is due in part to sexual tension, tension which Maddox (1975) calls more extreme in the case of a stepchild because of the "weakening of the incest

taboo." (p. 91). The data from the present study does not bear this out. Complaints of stepchildren were centered around discipline. One grown stepchild, however, volunteered the information that her teen years were the most difficult because her stepfather resented all of her boyfriends:

But here I am with a boyfriend who is just like my stepfather, not my real father. What do you think of that?

(Erica, 2/15/76, p. 1).

The conflict between teenagers and parents is normal for all families, as adolescents strive for independence. Brandes (1972) writes of the disastrous results of forced "togetherness" in his study of ten patients who were raised in close restrictive families:

Eight...of ten did not go through a rebellious period until reaching late adolescence or young adulthood. The one who began to rebel in early adolescence completed his adolescent development with the least amount of disturbance.

(p. 519-520).

In the present study friending was less often extended to teenagers.³ Two major patterns develop depending on the age of the child at the time of the marriage. Those children who were a young age at the time of the marriage became distant from the stepfather at teenage, even if they had been friendly earlier. The stepfather responded to rejection with counter-rejection. When the stepchild was a teenager at the time of the remarriage, the stepfather made some friending attempts which were rejected, and he did not persist as he

might have with a younger child. He did persist in his attempts to enforce rules, however, widening the cleft between stepparent and child. One stepdaughter so resented her stepfather that she moved to an older sister's home shortly after her mother's marriage (Jessica, 7/7/75). Stepdaughters were more consistently distant from their stepfathers than were stepsons. This finding agrees with the results of a study by Bowerman and Irish (1962) of 26,000 teenagers. Girls and fathers were found to have the most distant relationship whether the fathers were stepfathers or biological fathers. (Stepmothers in the present study were distant from teenagers of both sexes in only half the instances.) Data from the present study indicates that the outcome of the teenage rift can be permanent or can be resolved when the child reaches the second decade of life. The longer the relationship exists prior to the teen years, the more likelihood that the rift will be repaired.

The Mother's Attitude and Friending or Unfriending.

Interaction between stepfather and child does not occur in isolation. The attitude of the child's mother toward child and stepfather greatly influences the amount of friending in the step-relationship. How the interaction goes, based on her influence, changes her perception of the two and of the relationship. Through the mother's eyes, the child can see

the new man in the house as avenger, or helper, high status or low status, close or distant. If "father" means to the mother a man who takes on an authoritarian role in the family, she pushes the stepfather into the position of punisher. The stepfather becomes a "hit man" in the eyes of the child, and this means to the child that the stepfather is a man who is to be feared and despised. If the stepfather is cast in the role of disciplinarian, rule enforcement becomes the goal toward which his behavior is directed. Friending becomes secondary, because his direction is child obedience. If the stepfather's time at home is taken up with meeting out punishment, he has less time and energy for friending. In the child-left-out homes, it is the mother who encourages the stepfather to punish the child, to hit him. In these homes, the stepfather is not a partner in child management, but the boss of not only the child, but the mother as well--by her choice. On the other hand, the mother who constantly protects her child from the stepfather, and carries messages from one to the other, disrupts all communication, including friending attempts. The mother who encourages the child to settle differences with the stepfather on his own, conveys the message to the child and the stepfather that they are reasonable people who can work out their problems. This allows the two to solve their own disputes. Both the stepfather and child gain in self-esteem, and the groundwork is laid for friendship. If the mother constantly disparages the stepfather, this indicates to the child that the man is

not worthy of the child's friendship. If, by contrast, the mother's attitude toward the stepfather is loving and respectful, the child will see the couple relationship as permanent and "try to get along." The child then inspects the stepfather to see what the mother sees in him. The mother who gives the child the impression that her relationship with her spouse is permanent, gives the child the security which comes of knowing who's going to be around tomorrow. If the child's question, "Are we going to stay here?" is answered in vague terms, the child is reticent about developing a close friendly relationship with the stepfather. Two of the couples interviewed had long-term, unmarried, live-in relationships. Zelda (9/9/75) said it was hard on Ollie not knowing if they were going to stay. When Chloe was angry, she told Garth and Ethan (3/4/76) that she didn't know if they would be staying with Justin. Justin said, "That makes my job harder." Asked what the job was he said, "I want them to love me " (p. 5). The attitude, perception and behavior of all persons involved in the step-relationship influence the amount of friending behavior which occurs. The child does not operate by himself, he reacts with other people in the house. The parents interact with each other, and with the child. The social intercourse of each with the other influences further interaction between all members. This agrees with Don Jackson's view of the family as an open system:

The family is an interacting communications network in which every member from the day-old baby to the 70-year-old grandfather influences the nature of the entire system and in turn is influenced by it. (1968, p. 14).

SUMMARY

The amount of friending in the family depends on perceptions and responses of the various members and their further responses to one another. The initial response is based on the sentimental order of the members. Subsequent responses are based on what the interactions between the members means to the individual members in the frame of reference of their sentimental order. The amount of friending is based on interaction and response. Therefore, in one sense, the conditions for friending and the outcomes are one in the same. General outcomes of friending in relation to family patterns are discussed in a later section.

The family is an open system, and influences from outside the system have a bearing on the interaction within the family. The main focus of this study is on the family itself. However, friending from outside the family plays a part in the interaction within the family, and can be an important support for the stepfather family. The following section deals with outside friending, peer support, and the accessibility of the family.

Outside Friends: Peer Support

Children of divorce and remarriage seek support from their peers; when they feel stigmatized by the divorce, it is to their peers that they go for legitimation, when they have fears concerning a stepfather, they go to their peers for advice. Adults, on the other hand, present a "couple front" of unity and represent themselves to their social group as having a remarriage which is aproblematic. When there is more than one child in a family of divorce, the siblings tend to become close and supportive of one another, at least until the crisis has passed. Close sibling ties can persist through the second marriage, especially if the family is large.

When children learn of their parents' divorce, they often tell a lifelong friend. Heather (2/19/76) was typical:

I told my friend Lois. I just had to tell somebody. She said it was all right, she didn't care.

(p. 8).

Heather felt stigmatized by the divorce, and she sought legitimation from her peer, Lois. Children ask advice of one another when a mother contemplates remarriage. Rose (11/11/75) both asked a friend for advice, and gave advice to another. Most of the children in this study talked over stepfather problems with a close friend. Milo's mother was aware of the importance of Milo's friendship ties, and when she remarried, she transported Milo fifteen miles a day to his old

school, so that he would not be separated from his peers. Milo, thirteen, can be compared with Emil, also thirteen. Emil said the worst thing about his mother's remarriage was that he had to move away from his friends. Emil, it will be remembered, was unhappy with his step-situation; Milo was happy with his. Eric, of the child-left-out family, was the only child I talked with who did not discuss his problems with his intimates. He was a shy lad, and his mother discouraged visits from Eric's friends. Erica (2/15/76), a grown stepchild, talked with me after I had interviewed several families. I checked out with her some of the things I had noticed:

Most of the kids are doing okay, you know. I thought I'd run into more unhappy kids.

Yeah, well, I bet they have plenty of stuff to tell their friends.

Oh. Yes, you mean, that's where kids go when they're having a hard time?

Sure. I told my friends everything I didn't like about my stepfather. What can you do? You tell your mother and she says, 'Sigh, try to get along.' A lot of my friends had stepfathers too--they knew what I was talking about.

(p. 1).

Ruby (11/6/75), a grown stepchild, talked to other stepchildren when she was in college. Ruby said she had talked with both black and white students, and their experiences were similar to her own. She was surprised to find that some students thought their stepfathers were worse than she thought hers was (p. 4).

Adults are quite another matter. Although many of the parents in this study had what they considered serious problems of adjustment, almost none of them went to their friends for advice, and only a few talked with other step-families. They may have kept their own counsel because of what G. O'Neill and N. O'Neill (1972) call the couple front:

The couple front is the outward manifestation of the clause in the closed marriage contract that calls for the two partners to be all things to one another, to fulfill all of one another's needs--emotional, psychological, intellectual and physical....The bondage of closed marriage requires husband and wife to turn off the outside world, and to turn on only to one another.
(pp. 162-163).

My own experience was as the O'Neills describe. The relationship between my daughter and my husband was not always smooth, but my own rearing dictated that any discussion of such matters should be dealt with within the family. I was shocked when my husband told outsiders about the problems we were having.⁴ The couples in the present study said the reason they did not seek out peers for support was that they "never thought of it." When I asked what they thought of a group for remarrieds similar to those for adopting parents, all of the couples thought it was an excellent idea, but not for them. Their reasons were, "the worst is over now" and "we don't go out much in the evening," or "he doesn't believe in groups." Women were more receptive to the idea of a group than men. Chloe (3/4/76) said if the group were called a class, and held through the public school system, it would

have more appeal. Chloe said for some people, "group suggests that something is wrong." Lending validity to Chloe's idea was the stepparent class. There were seven members, and the instructor told me that the class size had been larger when it was more widely publicized. The members of the class said they had been helped by the knowledge that their problems were shared by other stepfamilies. There were other examples. Several stepfathers had been asked to advise men contemplating marriage to a woman with children. One stepfather in the study had asked another for information before the marriage. When I called Virginia (4/12/76) some time after the interview, she told me that since I had asked the question about talking with other stepfamilies, she had made a point of seeking out other steps. Roy (11/6/75) said that living next door to another stepfather had helped him in his own situation. Roy said it was clear to him that the man resented his stepson as much as the boy resented the man. Roy observed that the boy and man never communicated directly, that they always talked through the mother or made remarks to the air. Roy said the bad example helped him look at his relationship with his stepson Claude.

SUMMARY

Stepchildren seek out, and are helped by, information and support from their peer group. Stepparents less often

seek peer information and support, but find it helpful when they do. Peer groups for adults are more acceptable in the form of a class rather than a "group." The title "group" connotes trouble, and is an admission of problems, while a class is by definition a place where students go to learn.

In the following section, the focus moves once more to the processes within the family. The effect of friending on family patterns is discussed in this section on general outcomes of friending.

Friending and Family Rule-Maker-Enforcer Patterns: Outcomes

Friending is a potent force, and the outcome of its application of family rule-maker-enforcer patterns is discussed in this section. In Chapters 3 and 4, it is established that family patterns are dynamic. Families fit more-or-less into maker-enforcer patterns, but they are not stuck with a particular conformation. They move back and forth, depending on circumstances within and without the family. It is conceivable, for example, that there might be a time when even the chaos family would act as an integrated unit; perhaps during an acute emergency, such as a fire. Integrated families might lapse into disintegration during a developmental crisis, such as teenage. Stepfather families do move toward integration under the influence of friending between step-

father and child. In this section, outcomes of the influence of friending are discussed in a general way, and more specifically through the use of some examples.

Anything-You-Say-Dear: Review. Figure 1 depicts this maker-enforcer pattern as the one most distant from the integrated pattern. Because the stepfather and children do not communicate directly, and because the wife's overt behavior is one of compliance, the house is relatively free of dissension and free also of discussion about non-compliance to rules. Therefore, change is unlikely. By her separation of the two, the mother cuts off communication. Even when stepfather and child spend time alone, the communication breakdown persists, and interaction tends to be strictly business. "Did you finish the south forty?" "Yes, now I have to see about getting the plow sharpened."

Friending in an anything-you-say dear family. In Greg's first experience as a stepfather, he assumed an authoritarian role with "not too much palling." Two of his wife's children were teenage boys. A third boy was eight, the same age as a biological son of Greg's. Greg compared the two constantly, and favored his own son. His wife Carolyn insinuated herself between stepfather and children and subverted his orders. The exception was Carolyn's four-year-old-daughter Gigi. Greg was gentle and friendly with Gigi, and Carolyn felt no need to block the interaction between the two. Greg was strict with the other children, but he was strong in several friending properties, particularly in coming through. The other children, as they grew older and left home, began to come to Greg for help, and he was eager to assist them whenever he could. When Gigi became a teenager, she found her stepfather too strict. For instance, he had forbidden smoking

in the house. Gigi, who smoked, spent her evenings away from the house where she could enjoy sanction-free smoking. She also began to visit her biological father more often. After she was grown, Gigi once more became friendly with Greg.

From Gregory, Georgia and Carolyn (10/15/75,
(10/21/75, 10/24/75, 12/11/75)

The example of Greg and Carolyn is one of contrasts and points to the part played by all members of a stepfather family. Integration was not possible with Carolyn's boys, because Greg was too strict, and instead of confronting him, Carolyn subverted him, thereby cutting off communication about what she considered to be a problem. Greg was less strict and more friending with Gigi, and Carolyn did not come between the two. If Gigi had been the only child of Carolyn, the family could have been considered integrated. But she was not the only child. The two older boys were teenagers, and as pointed out earlier, teenage is a particular problem in stepfather families. The third child of Carolyn, eight-year-old Sam, suffered by comparison with Greg's own child. In Chapter 3, comparison with a biological child is established as a condition undermining integration in stepfather families. Carolyn perceived this to be quite unfair, and interfered. It is of special interest that Greg later became the stepfather of Milo, one of the two teenage stepchildren in this study who liked his step-situation. Greg behaved quite differently the second time he became a stepfather. He did not try to impose his rules on Milo. Milo's mother, Georgia, (Greg's third wife) also behaved differently from Carolyn (Greg's second wife). Georgia believed in talking

everything out, and any conflicts between herself and Greg continued until settled, even if it meant they got no sleep. Carolyn, on the other hand, did not believe in disputing Greg, and although she was dissatisfied with his handling of her children, in eighteen years of marriage they never discussed it. (It is also of interest that Carolyn made friends with Greg's oldest son, the child of his first marriage. However, Greg, Jr., the child Greg and Carolyn had together, couldn't tolerate his stepmother, Georgia, nor she him.) Teenage is a time for asserting independence, and Gigi's conflict with Greg took the form of a dispute over smoking. Instead of going to a teacher or an uncle as some adolescents do, she had a spare father to whom she could turn her attention. Bohannan (1975) has suggested that multiple parenting, which is the rule in some societies, can work to the advantage of the stepchild. Although the family of Greg and Carolyn never became completely integrated, Greg employed some important friending properties, and the children returned to be his friend when they became adult.

Chaos and Friending. The maker-enforcer pattern of chaos is depicted in Figure 1 as one in which no one makes or enforces rules. In the chaos pattern, members rarely converse. Since, as Jackson (1967) said, "one cannot not communicate" (p. 42), the fact that they do not speak carries with it a message. Not speaking signifies that the one not

spoken to is either too fearsome, too inferior, or too in need of punishment for some sin to be addressed. Friending is difficult under these circumstances. Not speaking means that one member must guess what meaning an action might have. Therefore, a do-nothing course may be considered the only safe one. Not speaking means that A not only has to guess what B is thinking, but A has to also guess what B will think later on. It can be very complicated. For instance, if A contemplates a friending act toward B, A must first decide what B's reaction will be, depending on how B is defined by A. If B is defined by A as fearsome, B's wrath may be further incurred. If B is defined by A as inferior, A may consider that a friending act will make B forget his inferior position and A's superior position. If B is defined by A as having sinned, A may fear that B will think he can sin again if he is let off the hook too soon. But A must remain ignorant about B's reaction because A and B don't speak to one another. Therefore, it is not safe to try friending in this family where members do not speak. The family is locked in a system which they are powerless to change. They are so involved in unfriending behavior that there is not room for another kind. Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) in their book, Change, postulate that what they call "second order change," i.e., change which is permanent and more than a change of position within the system, must come from outside the system. In the chaos pattern, friending, then, would occur only through the influence of a force from outside the system.

The chaos family of Floyd, Polly, Amy, and Forrest, is described at length in Chapter 4, and further discussion is not necessary at this point, with one exception: In a series of four interviews, there were stories of past and aborted attempts at friending, but no current evidence that any friending was occurring within the family from the first interview in July to the last interview in November. That is to say, friending between the members who were at odds. As pointed out in Chapter 4, some members speak to one another: Polly talks to her children, and to her husband; the siblings speak to one another.

Not-My-Kid and Friending. This is the maker-enforcer pattern where all stepfather families start. By referring once again to Figure 1, it can be determined that the family can move up into the integrated pattern, to the right into the chaos pattern, or can cross over into the anything-you-say-dear or the child-left-out patterns. It is the influence of friending which moves the family toward integration, the absence of it which moves the family into another pattern. Not-my-kid is not a stable pattern. In this pattern the mother places herself between stepfather and child. Referring back to the communication patterns described in Chapter 5, the mother who goes-between, creates a situation where the child defines the stepfather as (a) too dangerous to trust, or (b) a man who is controlled by the mother and therefore,

not masterful. These are both unacceptable definitions to the stepfather and he protests. In the not-my-kid pattern, the mother openly resists the stepfather. This leads to conflict. Conflict involves verbal exchanges in this pattern, and therefore, there is a chance for a resolution of the conflict or a disintegration of the marriage. The not-my-kid family of Roy and Peggy is described in detail in Chapter 4 and in the preceding section of this chapter. The effect of Roy's friending is also described. To recall, Roy was, in part, made aware of the effect of unfriending by watching the interaction between a neighboring stepfather and his son. Roy realized that he was inexperienced with children, and took a child development class. Roy now employs friending in most of its properties, and the family is moving toward integration.

Child-Left-Out and Friending. In this maker-enforcer pattern, everyone is integrated excepting one young, dependent child. To recall the communication pattern once more, the mother who turns over child management to the stepfather defines herself as inadequate to manage her own child, and the child is so "bad" that she must call in an outsider, the stepfather, to manage him. The stepfather is defined as dangerous to the child. In Figure 1, child-left-out is hard by the integrated pattern and to the right. The child-left-out pattern has most of the classical signs of a family which

resolves its problems through scapegoating a child. The pattern either includes an acting-out behavior problem, or an acting-in "spacey" child. I was surprised to find that friending occurs in these families, sometimes in sufficient amounts, that the family moves into integration. I was able to determine this progress through the examination of the past history of the family compared with the present history, the conditions which existed at the time of the interview. Families, which at the beginning of the marriage had been cast more-or-less into the not-my-kid pattern, where the mother said, "I can't handle him, you take over," had gone through a time of "a lot of trouble," but through stepfather friending and some maternal independence and equalization, had moved into a more integrated pattern. Parts of the Dale and Gail story appear elsewhere in this report. It is presented here in an organized whole to illustrate the outcome of friending in a child-left-out home:

Friending in a child-left-out family. Dale and Gail agreed that discipline is very important, and both thought it was essential that children obey. Gail's first husband did not take the discipline of children seriously, and Gail's view was that her boys, Ivan, eight, and Jack, five, needed a strong, masculine hand. Gail's father had been unquestioned ruler in her home, and her second husband, Dale, had had a similar background. Dale's father was in charge, and used corporal punishment when Dale misbehaved. "I never loved my father until I was eighteen, and then I realized I could always count on what he said--he always kept his promises." It seemed natural to Gail to encourage Dale to take over the management of her boys. "I can't imagine why some mothers have trouble with the stepfather over discipline." Gail was happy "not having the responsibility" of being in charge of child management. She did confer with Dale on rules, and did enforce rules, but, "I'm easier." Gail said that she found being a mother, "just real hard." When they were first married, it was Gail who encouraged Dale to spank the boys for

disobedience. They were resentful, and talked constantly about the time when they would be old enough to live with their biological father. Ivan was especially resentful, and became a behavior problem. Jack was more willing to cooperate. Dale helped Ivan get passing grades in school by helping him with his homework. Ivan gained in self-esteem, and began modeling himself after his stepfather. At the time of the interview, it was Jack, then eight, who was the problem child in the family. Jack was described as "sneaky" and as "going blank" when he was spoken to. During the interview, I said, "I wonder what's bothering him?" Dale had said, "Spanking doesn't work, nothing works with Jack." Then he said, "Maybe I should try something else." Dale said one of the mistakes he and Gail had made was holding Jack back in school. Jack seemed to be disturbed over the divorce and remarriage, and when he changed schools, he didn't do well in the first grade. After two weeks, the parents arranged to have him held back in kindergarten for another year. Jack was desolate for a week. Dale said, "I wonder if that isn't the reason." (He was talking about Jack's behavior problem.)

Dale said he thought the boys had learned to trust his word; he never promised what he couldn't deliver. Dale spent as much time as business would allow with the boys. He taught the family to ski, and it was something they all enjoyed. Dale took his child management duties seriously, and gave a lot of thought to the rearing of the boys. "Sometimes I think I'm too strict," Dale said. He often checked this out with Gail. At first she said he wasn't too strict, but recently, she suggested that he ease up. She also suggested that Dale become more strict with his biological children when they visited on weekends. Gail returned to school after her divorce from her first husband, and she has completed the work for an A.A. degree. Her plans were to continue her education to the masters level.

When I telephoned Gail a week after the interview, I said that it seemed that Jack was low man on the totem pole. Gail said that Jack's trouble was that he had always been small and cute, but that that was no longer true. "Now he's eight, and nobody thinks he's cute anymore. He's just eight, that's all. Jack is a shit disturber." Jack, she said, was doing better. Dale had bought him a new mitt for softball. Jack, she said, was good at the game and he felt better. She said he was an "honored member" of the family once more.
(From Dale and Gail, 3/4/76, 3/19/76)

Three years after the marriage, the family of Dale and Gail had managed to achieve some measure of integration. The family had many of the properties of the child-left-out category. Corporal punishment was used, and Gail turned over

her boys to Dale for management. First Ivan, then Jack, took the role of family scapegoat. However, Dale's use of friending worked to remove Ivan from the low self-esteem scapegoat role. Dale taught Ivan how to improve his schoolwork, and raised his self-esteem. Teaching is friending. Dale spent time with the boys, another friending property. Jack, who was in the scapegoat role at the time of the interview, was helped by Dale to regain status. Dale spent money getting Jack a baseball mitt. Jack was encouraged to practice a game for which he had talent. Integration demands equal status for all. Gail, partly by improving her education, gained status. She was able to encourage Dale to be less strict. Another process at work in this family was the influence of outside peer contact. The researcher, who was also part of a stepfather family, and therefore a peer, suggested that the child Jack might be acting "blank" because of something that was troubling him. Dale responded to the comment by trying to understand what might be bothering the boy. In a week's time he had purchased the softball mitt and the position of Jack had improved.

SUMMARY

The use of friending can be applied to any family maker-enforcer pattern, but in the chaos pattern, it is improbable. The outcome of consistent friending is movement toward inte-

gration. If the mother blocks interaction, the integration is delayed. But even the child in the scapegoated role of child-left-out can gain status through friending, and the family configuration can begin to change to a more integrated pattern. Outside influence can be helpful in moving families to a more integrated life style.

Summary of Part 1

Stepfather, mother, and child bring to a remarriage a sentimental order of family life. If the stepfather's perception of child management is that the child who is treated as a high status member can be won over, the stepfather will employ the strategies of the various properties of friending to gain the child's cooperation. The stepfather's behavior is influenced by the timing of the marriage. If the union occurs during middle life, he may be weary of childrearing. If he considers making friends with the stepchild too taxing, and resorts to an authoritarian approach sans friending, the outcome is disintegrating. The vital part the child plays is illustrated by the resistance of teenagers. The younger child, regardless of his sentimental view, is dependent, and has a greater need to cooperate. The adolescent is more independent, and his lack of cooperation disrupts the integration of the household. The mother can aid friending or deter

it. A mother whose sentimental order calls for a stepfather as disciplinarian, casts him into an unfriendly role in relation to the child. Open conflict of the spouses over childrearing is more likely to be settled than is subversion, because differences can be worked out. The mother who encourages stepfather and child to resolve their own differences creates an atmosphere where friending can also occur. The mother who protects her child too long, separates the stepfather and child, and prevents them from becoming friends. Children actively seek peer support outside the stepfather home. They find conferring with peers a way of easing tension provoked by being in a step-relationship. Spouses in a stepfather family form a "couple front" and attempt to solve their problems without peer council. When they do observe or talk with peers, it is helpful to their own relationship. Friending is a potent force which allows integration to occur in a variety of rule-maker-enforcer patterns of childrearing.

Friending, Part 2, concerns integrative undermining, a form of friending which is both a sign of integration and is itself integrative.

PART 2

INTEGRATIVE UNDERMINING: STEPFATHER AS CHILD CHAMPION

Integrative undermining both signifies and promotes integration. The process is a special property of friending where the stepfather, rather than the mother, becomes the champion of the child's cause, and pleads his case. A new alliance is formed--stepfather and child against the mother. The action of the stepfather is perceived as friending by the child, and by the mother, as well. If the stepfather is successful in undermining the mother, his impact on the mother-child package effects depackaging of the package. He emerges victor in the child management dispute, and gains status in the household. The outcome is integrative. The process is opposite to disintegrative undermining, where the mother is child champion, undermining the stepfather. A third undermining process, which I call standard undermining exists in intact homes with two biological parents. Standard undermining consists of low key integrative and disintegrative undermining. Because the home is intact, the parents do not see this undermining as a struggle for power over child management. They do not even see it as undermining, and call it "giving advice" or an "opinion." This section focuses on integrative undermining. It is compared with disintegrative undermining and standard undermining.

Disintegrative undermining, it will be recalled, is a process where the stepfather attempts to take over child management, and is blocked by the mother who undermines his efforts. She can undermine him in front of the child, or battle it out with him behind closed doors. Having one's discipline undermined is never pleasant, but when one is in the out position trying to take on management tasks, the effect can be devastating. Having tried to gain a foothold on management and failed, the stepfather's status is lowered. The mother and child remain packaged, and the stepfather is odd man out. The effect is disintegrative.

Integrative undermining is a process which both signals and promotes integration. The process occurs in integrated homes with such consistency, that it can be considered an indicator of integration. In this process, the stepfather advocates for leniency in child management, and his action means to the mother and child that the stepfather is as concerned for the child's happiness and growth as is the mother. The mother's attitude is one of benevolence. She allows the stepfather to change her rule, and he gains a foothold on rule-making. Undermining the mother brings the stepfather in on decision making. For example, when the stepfather's appraisal is that the child is old enough for a door key, but the mother disagrees, his position becomes that of child champion. The child sees that the stepfather is pleading on his behalf for a new privilege. The child sides with the stepfather (his champ) and a new structural arrangement

occurs where the child and stepfather are aligned in opposition to the mother. In a sense, all friending by the stepfather undermines the mother's position of supreme power, but it is only in integrative undermining that there is an open choosing up of new sides. As the stepfather pleads, "Take it easy on the kid," the mother allows the undermining, because it means to her that she has evidence that the stepfather is not the child's enemy, wanting to change behavior in the child simply for the convenience of adults. When the mother acquiesces, as she generally does, the stepfather, who had been odd man out, gets in on management. In altering the mother's rule, he makes a new rule. By winning a decision, the stepfather reduces the power of the mother and adds power to himself. The child's position improves because he has a new privilege or a reduced punishment. The three are now more equal in status. One of the requisites for integration is equality.

Examples of integrative undermining were abundant in this study. Fred (6/7/75) undermined Beth when she placed too many restrictions on her boys for indiscretions: he moved for a reduction of sentences. Earnest (9/29/75) undermined Evelyn when he pointed out that she was in the habit of screaming at her daughter. Earnest encouraged Evelyn to pursue a softer approach. Gene (11/5/75) undermined Virginia when she was reprimanding Essie. Gene pleaded, "Take it easy on the kid." Virginia said that she was angry that he had interfered, but from other information gathered at the inter-

view, I determined that she trusted Gene to manage Essie, and that Gene and Essie became pals. Gene's "take it easy on the kid" was typical of his attitude toward the child. The story of Ed, Marie, Kent, and Lorraine (11/20/75, 1/15/76) appears, in part, here and there on these pages. Presented more completely here, it is an excellent example of the workings of integrative and disintegrative undermining. Kent, eleven, and his stepfather, Ed, became close friends, but there was impolite distance between Ed and Marie's oldest child, eighteen-year-old Lorraine. When Lorraine was away at college, the home could be considered integrated. When she was home, it was not. (Lorraine is not a child-left-out, because (a) she is not small and defenseless, and (b) her mother did not turn over management to the stepfather.) Ed undermined Marie on Kent's behalf, while Marie undermined Ed on Lorraine's behalf:

Integrative and disintegrative undermining in one family.
 Ed said that Kent was big enough to have his own house key. Kent got home from school two hours before Marie arrived from work. With a key, he would not have to wait at the neighbor's house until Marie arrived. Marie thought Kent would lose the key, but at Ed's insistence, she was willing to give it a try. The experiment was successful. Kent enjoyed the higher status that came with a possession of a key, and Ed gained status by putting his rule into effect. He had become rule-maker. In the matter of Kent's medication for hyperkinesis, Marie was doubtful about trying to discontinue Kent's amphetamines which he had been taking for several years. "You don't know what it was like before," she said. Ed and Kent pleaded, and Marie gave in. The attempt to do without medication was successful with Ed's help. After these and other like instances, Ed became full management partner where Kent was concerned. The relationship between Ed, Marie, and teenaged Lorraine was quite the opposite. Ed didn't undermine Marie to gain privileges for Lorraine, he tried to impose restrictions instead. Lorraine told me her view of what happened when she wanted a

gasoline credit card for identification. Ed wouldn't let her have a card. Lorraine pointed out that she needed two means of identification to get checks cashed at college. She told Ed that since she didn't have a car, she wouldn't be charging gasoline. Ed said he was afraid she would buy gas for a friend. Lorraine was outraged, because she said she had "never been in trouble" and took pride in the fact that her mother always trusted her, and she never betrayed that trust. Ed advised Lorraine to get an identification card from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Lorraine countered that since she already had a driver's license, the two identifications would be no better than one. Ed said he still couldn't agree to get her a credit card. At this point, Lorraine's mother undermined Ed, and said she would take care of getting the card. Marie's action was disintegrative undermining, because she came between Ed and Lorraine, and the two were further apart than ever. By losing the dispute, Ed lost status.

(From Ed, Marie, Lorraine and Kent, 11/20/75,
1/15/76)

Ed's undermining on the side of Kent served to integrate the family. The mother cooperated, and the boy sided with the stepfather bringing him in as manager. Ed did not act as Lorraine's champion, so Marie undermined on behalf of Lorraine. In both cases, the action of all involved served to integrate or disintegrate the unit.

Once the stepfather is a full-charge management partner, he can campaign for more strictness on certain issues without the danger of the maternal-child package rising up against him, because he is no longer on the outside looking in. The family is integrated. They can now move into standard undermining, where there is a balance between the parents, and the child is championed sometimes by one parent, sometimes by the other, and sometimes not at all.

Standard undermining is a low-level interference in child management that goes on in homes with two biological parents.

Because both parents have been on the scene since the birth of the child, they are not so acutely aware of who's speaking up for whom. Two biological parents are not so easily offended over child management issues, because they both have structural rights. The intact home is usually more integrated than a step-home is at the beginning of the marriage. Standard undermining often occurs around growth and development. For example, as one parent warns a young child away from a slide, the other "suggests" that the youngster is old enough and strong enough to manage the equipment. The following vignette illustrates the process of standard undermining. It also demonstrates the low-key quality of the undermining; so low-key that the parents do not perceive of it as undermining. The characters are Bartlett and Edna, and their biological daughter, two-year-old Anna:

(Edna is holding a glass of fruit juice for Anna.
As Anna struggles to hold it herself. Edna speaks)

Edna: No, let Mommie hold it, you'll spill it.

Anna: No, me!

Bartlett: Let her have it Edna, she can do it.

(Edna shrugs and lets Anna have the glass. Anna triumphantly walks across the room, stands by her father, and carefully drinks the juice without spilling.)

Phyllis: Bartlett, you were undermining.

Bartlett (shocked voice): I was? I was? But, usually I tell Edna she should be more firm with Anna. I was undermining? Me?

Phyllis: Well, but is that bad? Anna can handle the fruit juice after all. Parents do that all the time.
(Edna and Bartlett, 4/4/76)

Standard undermining can be integrating or disintegrating, depending on the power positions of the parents. The child generally sides with his champion. If one parent successfully undermines the other on a regular basis, the outcome is disintegrating. The parent left out of management loses control. If the left out parent undermines the parent in power, the undermining serves to equalize the power structure.

CONCLUSIONS

When the one left out, the stepfather, attempts to gain a foothold on child management, and his attempt is undermined by the mother, there is a re-firming of the maternal-child package. The family moves away from integration and toward disintegration. When the one left out, the stepfather, subverts the rule (undermines it) of the one in power, the mother, it is a move toward integration. If the one in power undermines the underminer, it is a move toward disintegration.

Footnotes

1. Gouldner (1954/1963) discusses the resentment of the men to "close supervision" in a factory (p. 159 and elsewhere). The outcome of close supervision was that the men did less work. Supervision pointed out to the men the inequality of their position to that of the supervisor.
2. It is possible that teenage girls do manage to become friends with stepfathers. Many years ago, two of my friends reported excellent relationships between their teenage daughters and a stepfather. However, the stepdaughters of teen age in this study were not friendly with their stepfathers.
3. Very few families refused to be interviewed when I contacted them. Those families which did refuse, all involved teenage children.
4. Erving Goffman's work, Presentation of self in everyday life (1959) contrasts the public self with the private self.

PART IV

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

When a man and the mother of children marry, they enter the union with high hopes that somehow the complicated conditions of their merger will work out, and they will become a happy new family. Because of the vagaries of human interaction, and its meaning for the interactants, the family can become an integrated unit, a disintegrating miserable group, or they can fall somewhere in between. The outcome is largely dependent on how the problems around childrearing are handled. When a stepfather joins the on-going system of the mother and child, he is in some ways an interloper. His entry causes a disequilibrium in the mother-child dyad. If he attempts to assume a child management position, he is undermined by the mother or the child, or often both. If he remains out of the child management position, he retains the status of outsider to the parent-child dyad. If he forces his way into management, either the child or the mother becomes the outsider, or if the reaction of the interactants is extreme, the marriage itself disintegrates. The present study examined the ways in which the stepfather family managed to achieve a high degree of integration in spite of the problem of the discipline of the children.

Integrative discipline emerged from the study as the basic social process in the ascension of the stepfather to a child management position under social-psychological and social-structural conditions where no family member was discounted or left out. The processes which contribute to the core variable of integrative discipline were contrasted with the opposing processes which move the stepfather family toward disintegration. The grounded substantive theory which has been discovered, points directions rather than describes absolutes. Totally integrated or disintegrated stepfather families are heuristic concepts which do not exist in the real world. A completely integrated family would be placed at a theoretical end point on a continuum, and would be peopled by automatons: always agreeing, always together, and never thinking or acting independently. The antipodal point on the continuum, complete disintegration, is also a hypothetical position: no family completely disintegrates--the memory of lost members lingers after divorce.

Integrative discipline has broad applicability to the real world of stepfather families. It explains the ways in which the stepfather family can manage children and find a place on a continuum more on the side of integration than disintegration. The present chapter recapitulates the theory of integrative discipline stressing its continuum-like quality, and briefly reviews the structural patterns which evolve with the use of integrative discipline. The patterns which evolve, with less integrative methods of child control, are

also discussed. The applicability of integrative discipline for the stepfather family is discussed, and the broad implications of the theory are suggested.

Continuum of Integrative Discipline

Integrative discipline is a theory of processes, and as such it is a set of interrelating concepts which address the problems of movement toward integration in the stepfather family in view of the necessity of discipline for children. It encompasses temporal aspects (the time it takes to reach a condition of homeostasis); social-structure process (the reordering of power positions, and the creation of rule-making-and-enforcing patterns); and communication patterns which determine the relative social distance of the interactants. The social context of the stepfather family is one in which an outsider strives to assume management of children over which he has no biological right, under conditions of resistance from their biological parent and the child.

Integrative discipline is a process which occurs over time. The interactants require a time period of one-and-one-half to two years to achieve a consistent homeostatic pattern of interacting. The family members need time to get acquainted, to learn to trust each other, and time to learn the needs of one another. Efforts to force the issue and hurry the integration are unsuccessful, and result in structural patterns

where one family member is left out of the action. The temporal aspect is a theme which pervades all of the processes of integrative discipline. The assumption of child management duties by the stepfather must be slow, time must be spent to make friends with the child, and time is needed to teach the child how it is the adults want him to behave. Conversely, time is needed for the stepfather to learn how it is the child wants him to behave. The mother, too, needs time to learn what behaviors on her part are conducive to integration. A part of discipline is learning, and integrative discipline is learning for the whole family.

Three highly complex processes comprise integrative discipline. Rule-making and rule-enforcing are considered together as processes of establishing social structure. The implementation of rules for child behavior, and the rules themselves, are contingent on the sentimental order of the family members. It is the sentimental order of the interactants which determines whether rules and their enforcement are acceptable. From their individual biographies, the family members, stepfather, mother and child have evolved a view of what is fitting and proper for family behavior. The stepfather, who adopts a slow, gentle, flexible rule-making-and-enforcing approach, achieves a greater measure of success in negotiating a compromise regarding changes in behavior for the family. When the child is allowed to participate in some of the decisions for the family, he attains a higher status position. The family group becomes more attractive to him,

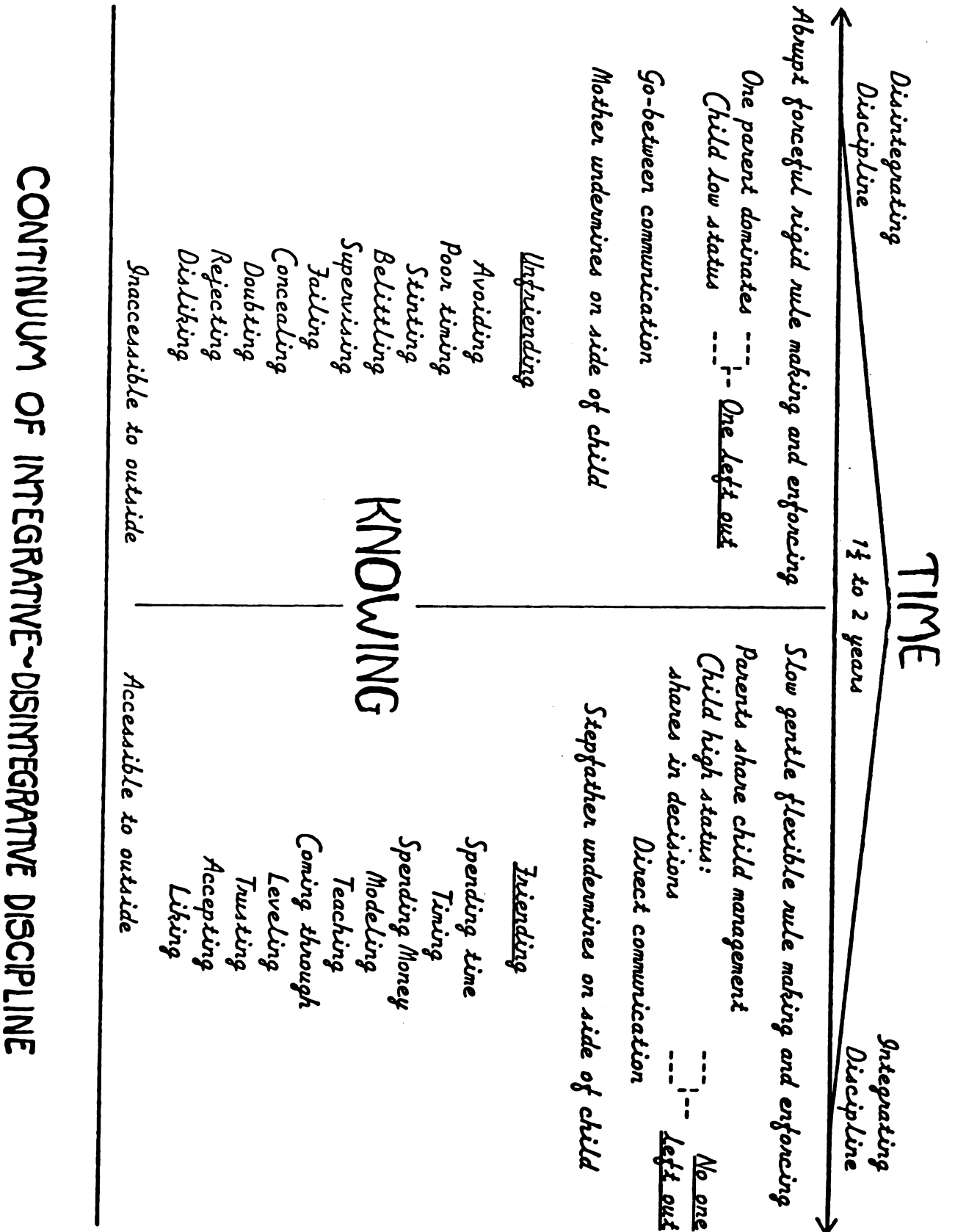
and he is more willing to comply to its norms. The stepfather who doesn't take the time to let his new (outsider) ideas sink in, is met with resistance from both the mother and child. Harsh modes of punishment to enforce rules, if allowed by the mother, usually control the behavior of the child, but cause him to be resentful or withdrawn. As such, they can be considered disintegrative rather than integrative, and cannot be considered as processes of integrative discipline.

The rule-making and rule-enforcing patterns in the stepfather family are both determined by, and determine, the communication patterns. The mother who is best acquainted with spouse and child often assumes the role of go-between explaining the behavior of one to the other. If the family is to move toward integration, the go-between role must be abandoned by the mother in favor of direct communication between stepfather and child. If the role is not discontinued, the family falls into one of the rule-making-and-enforcing patterns which can be considered less, rather than more, integrated.

The stepfather who considers the child a high status member in the family will engage in the winning-over behavior which comprises the process of friending. Friending is reciprocal for stepfather and child. The stepfather who is friendly to the child, gains a friend. The stepchild who considers the surrogate father a person of value, models his behavior after him, thus flattering the stepfather. The child who has a friend for a stepfather is more willing to cooper-

ate in the rules of the house, because the house is more attractive to him. The stepfather, on the other hand, who has as his goal the control of the child, rather than the friendship of the child, engages in behaviors which place the family on the disintegrated side of the integration-disintegration continuum.

A reordering of the power structure in the family is achieved by the process of integrative undermining. In this process, the stepfather becomes the champion of the child in a family dispute over discipline. In this seemingly paradoxical situation, the child becomes aligned with the stepfather against the mother. The mother, in her turn, views this as a friendly alliance, and one which she wishes to encourage. She willingly gives up her position of supreme power over the child. The stepfather gains some of the status which was the mother's, and brings the status of the child, his ally, up with him. The outcome is a situation of greater equality, and more complete integration. However, if the mother undermines the stepfather as he attempts to gain child management status, the outcome is that the stepfather is in a lower status position than at the outset. He has not only lost the attempt to move in on the power base, but he has lost face, as well. The family moves toward disintegration. The continuum of integrative-disintegrative discipline is depicted schematically in Figure 2 on page 222. The processes and properties of disintegration are found to the left of the diagram; those of integration to the right.



CONTINUUM OF INTEGRATIVE~DISINTEGRATIVE DISCIPLINE

Figure 2

The time of the shakedown cruise when jockeying-for-position occurs is represented at the top of the schema as one-and-one-half to two years. The processes of integration are placed opposite the processes of disintegration. Central to the processes is knowing. Thus, the abrupt, forceful, rigid rule-making-and-enforcing of integrative discipline is contrasted with the slow, gentle, flexible rule-making-and-enforcing of integrative discipline. Left-out structuring, where the child is low status and one parent dominates, is placed in opposition to the integrative structuring where no one is left out. The parents share child management, and the child, a high status member, shares in decisions. Go-between communication is compared with the integrative direct communication. Disintegrative undermining is opposite integrative undermining. The properties of unfriending are directly opposite the matching properties of unfriending, so that avoiding is paired with spending time. The other pairs are poor timing which faces timing, stinting opposite spending money, and belittling, opposing modeling. Supervising is compared with teaching, failing with coming through, concealing with leveling, doubting with trusting, rejecting with accepting, and disliking with liking. Accessibility to the outside where peer support helps integration is contrasted with inaccessibility where the family is isolated, and there is little peer support. The arrows at the top of the diagram suggest that a family can be placed at any point on the integration-disintegration continuum.

Integrative Discipline and Rule-Maker-Enforcer Patterns

In the process of integrative discipline, all family members contribute to the integration of the family. In the absence of integrative discipline, social structural patterns are formed in the family which are not integrated or integrating. All stepfather families begin in the social structural position where the mother has the total responsibility for child management. The new man, the stepfather, enters the mother-child system as a spouse. If the discipline of the house is integrative, the family can move slowly to a social structural position of integration, where no one in the family is left out. Even the child engages in some decision making, and has some control over his life. The family achieves a homeostatic social order which is characterized by equality, communication, and a feeling of belonging. This is an integrated, or nobody-left-out pattern. Other patterns of structure in the family are less integrated.

The stepfather whose discipline is not integrative is met with resistance by the mother. She attempts to keep him in a left-out position. This is called the not-my-kid pattern because the mother declares her child her exclusive dominion. Her resistance leads to conflict with the stepfather. The pattern is not stable, and the family must move to another pattern. If the conflict persists, the family may move into the most disintegrated pattern of chaos, where everyone is left out. Everyone in the family tries to make

rules, and no one attends the rules of others. The family members rarely communicate with one another except to disagree, and nothing gets done. The family may disintegrate to the point of divorce.

A social structural pattern where the stepfather is asked by the mother to take over management of the child can have two outcomes. In one pattern, the mother gives token rule-making-and-enforcing power to the stepfather, but acts as go-between and subverts his efforts. The patterns of communication are indirect, and the interaction is on the disintegrative side of the continuum. The family consists of a spousal pair, and a mother-child dyad. The pattern is a stable one because conflict is minimal. This is called the pattern of anything-you-say-dear, because the mother first placates the stepfather, and then she and the children handle things their own way.

The structural pattern which ensues when the mother asks the stepfather to take over the management of the child and means just that, is called the child-left-out pattern. In this pattern of rule-making-and-enforcing, the stepfather engages in coercive methods to control the behavior of the child. The child either continues to act out in a rebellious manner, or gives up, and adopts acting-in "spacey" behavior. In this structural condition, the child becomes the scapegoat on which the parents focus their attention.

Integrative Discipline and Free Access: Peer Support

One of the conditions which fosters and is fostered by integrative discipline is free access to the family by the outside world. Children especially, are helped in the integrative process by peer support. Stepchildren compare notes with other children about conditions in the family, and sometimes find other stepchildren to advise them. In this way, children are able to relieve tensions brought on by a step-relationship. Adults, too, who communicate with other stepparents, gain from the experience. However, peer support for adults in a stepfather family situation is rare.

Implications for the Theory for Stepfather Families

The theory of integrative discipline is grounded in the substantive world of stepfather families, and as such it fits their situation. It addresses the real-life problems of controlling children in a stepfather situation. The theory gives stepfather families insight into ways in which they can gain some measure of control over the situation in which they find themselves. It addresses problems in a language which is understandable to the persons in the action scene. The theory is based on a wide variety of stepfather families, from a number of cultural orientations. It is a theory of process. As such, its applicability is not confined to the participants

of the study, but can be applied to the wider world of stepfather families in the contemporary society of America. Future studies may discover new properties of the processes described here, and new dimensions of the properties. The requirements of the applicability of a substantive theory that it be understandable to the interactants, that it fit the substantive area, and that it allows some measure of control over structure and process in the scene over time, and that it is sufficiently general for wide applicability, are therefore satisfied.¹

Uses of the Theory for the Stepfather Family

The new spouses in a stepfather family may be unwilling to devote time and energy to integrative discipline, absorbed as they are in their own new relationship. However, the children are there, under foot and raising havoc (the noise of stepchildren is louder). In the end, taking the time for integrative discipline may take less time.

Fit. The theory as presented here has to do with the real-life situations encountered by stepfather families. The stepfather who wonders why it's taking so long for things to settle down, may take comfort in the fact that time is needed in all stepfather families to allow for getting to know the needs of others, and to develop a sentimental order which applies to the new family. The stepfather whose aim

is control over the child, may reconsider, and adopt friendship as a desired outcome. The man who feels that it is too much trouble to make friends with the child may find examples in Chapter 6 which demonstrate to him that since the child will be around for a while, it may be less effort in the long run to make friends. The mother in the family can find in Chapter 4, examples of go-between behavior which continue too long, and create social distance between stepfather and child. She may consider abandoning the role. The child in the family can find ways to help the stepfather feel that he belongs by letting him in on the family jokes and asking the stepfather to teach him things.

Understanding. The theory has been couched in the terms used by the interactants. My aim is a report which can be read by someone other than another Doctor of Nursing Science.

Control. The theory of integrative discipline provides ways in which stepfather families can work their way out of the morass of unhappy spouses and miserable children. For example, a small child faced with a large man who is unknown to him doesn't trust the man until he is better acquainted. An understanding of the child's point of view may stave off the stepfather's resentment of a shy or acting-out child. In this report I have attempted to outline ways in which the stepfather and child can become friends. I have described the properties of friending in great detail. Here and there in an advice-to-parents book, mention is made that the step-

parent who makes friends with stepchildren is more successful, but the properties of the process are not described.

Generality. The concepts outlined in this report are sufficiently explicit that they apply to the population studied. They are presented in a sufficiently abstract manner that they are applicable to other situations and useful over time. For example, any stepfather can level with his stepchild, regardless of the circumstances or the age of the child. Other properties of friending are useful in a variety of situations. The poorest stepfather can usually find a penny or two to spend on a stepchild. Every stepfather has something to teach a child.

Implications for Health Professionals

The theory of integrative discipline provides nurses and other health professionals with guidelines for addressing the problems of integration which center around discipline in stepfather families. The "expert" who advises the parent and stepparent to settle matters of discipline before the marriage, is akin to theorists who force data to fit theory. The suggestions that "when a couple presents a united front, it's the greatest security they can offer a child" (Kiely, 1976, p. 2) is poor advice, according to the present research. A united enforcement front may invite a structural condition of child-left-out. Children in this structural pattern are

described by their parents as "spacey," "going blank," or "absent-minded." This is typical behavior of a scapegoated child.

The paradox of integrative undermining may have special uses in stepfather families. One is reminded of the "counter-paradox" techniques described by Watzlawick and associates (1974, pp. 85-86). The stepfather who feels left out can get into power by siding with the person he has been in conflict with, the stepchild. The child for whom he has secured a special privilege may change his behavior because he wants to; he may feel better about himself because he has a new champ. Health professionals counselling stepfather families may consider advising the stepfather to find ways of aligning himself with the child.

Peer support for the parents in a stepfather family is scarce. Parents Without Partners, the organization for divorced parents, offers help for single parents, but once a parent remarries, he is no longer eligible to be a member of the organization. Parents without Partners has plans to create an organization which will help remarried couples. However, this new group is in the fledgling stage.² The suggestion that a class, rather than a group, might be more desirable for stepparents is worth consideration. Classes could be offered free or at reasonable rates through local high schools or community colleges.

Broad Implications: Extension to Formal Theory

The theory of integrative discipline emerged from the substantive area of stepfather families. However, it may be used to address problems which concern discipline and integration in a variety of social conditions.

Much of the behavior in stepfather families is like behavior in any family situation. The salient differences in stepfather families are (1) the entry of a new man who intends to move into the position of child manager, and (2) the focus of the stepfather family on their stepness--the stepness is a real difference to them. The theory is easily transferable to the biological family. Biological families disintegrate. The disintegrating rule-maker-enforcer patterns which are described in this report when they exist in intact families create social distance between biological parent and child. The friending process is as applicable to biological children as it is to stepchildren. The process of integrative undermining would work to alter power positions as well in intact families as in step-families, when used in its abstract form: When one parent is in charge of rule-making-enforcing, and the one left out subverts the rule, it is a move toward integration. Thus, the undermining of the one in power will equalize the power in the family.

The stepfather is attempting to take on a management role. The theory of integrative discipline is applicable to situations which involve the introduction of a new person to a

middle management position. An example is the introduction of a new head nurse to a well-established hospital ward. Gaining control and getting "on the inside" of an on-going social system is a problem for the new manager. The ward personnel resist the interloper who is placed in the structural position of rule-maker and rule-enforcer. The ward has a sentimental order, a way of doing things which they consider normal and right. The personnel often have sentimental ties to the departed manager. The new head nurse is a successor with limited access to formal structure to gain control. Efforts to use the formal structure of the larger organization are only partially successful. If the head nurse attempts to "pull rank" she can be sabotaged by her subordinates. Resentful underlings can disrupt the ward, and the new manager appears inefficient in her running of the unit. Orders are lost, supplies fail to appear, instructions don't get passed along, and most subversive of all, the new boss is not made privy to the sentimental order of the ward--she is not told the ways in which she can "fit" into the system of the ward. The new head nurse has limited control over the replacement of mal-contented. If she can't hang on to valued workers, she may be replaced herself. It may be a year or two before the normal turnover of employees allows her to bring in loyal lieutenants--her own people. She cannot make use of the informal structure of the ward, unless she is willing to use friending processes to learn it. The judicious use of the properties of friending can abet the

head nurse in her effort to gain the cooperation of the ward personnel. The use of integrative undermining has applicability in this situation. The head nurse who intercedes for the workers to gain privileges from higher management can alter the existing power structure. An example of this is gaining extra personnel for the ward to weather a crisis situation. If she is able to secure "floaters" for busy times, the head nurse shows that she has the power to alter conditions, and she acts to align herself with the staff. Higher management, in turn, is pleased with a smoothly-functioning unit.

Recommendations for Further Study

The present study has addressed problems of integration and discipline in the substantive area of stepfather families. Further uses of integrative discipline are suggested by this study, and may be addressed in future research studies. Some of the areas which require further research are as follows:

1. Teenagers in this study were unwilling to accept the stepfather in the family. Their complaints centered about the problems of control. Teenagers considered the control the stepfather wanted to exert as excessive; stepfathers considered their control over teenagers insufficient. The existence of two stepchildren of teen age in this study who

did not have a serious break with the stepfather during the teen years, suggests that there is an integrative discipline which can be used with adolescent stepchildren. Further research may evaluate the use of integrative discipline for teenagers.

2. Integrative discipline may be applicable to stepmother families. The focus of the present study was on stepfathers. However, many stepfathers have children from a previous sexual union which live full- or part-time with a stepmother or who visit on weekends. A serendipitous finding of this investigation suggests that stepmothers adjust better to children who live in the home full-time better than stepfathers do. This is a finding which does not agree with other investigations (Smith, 1945; Bowerman & Irish, 1962; Duberman, 1973). Part-time stepmothers have more difficulty. The stepmothers who have problems seem to have difficulty with discipline. Those stepmothers interviewed who were successful with stepchildren used friending techniques as aids to integration. It is possible that stepmothers are more willing to use the winning-over strategies of friending because of traditional family roles. The functional view of family roles of Parsons and Bales (1955) is that the mother is the "expressive" member of the family. This may have some bearing on the present study. It may seem less demeaning to a woman to make attempts to gain the friendship of a child: It is more in keeping with her role to be affectionate with stepchildren. The status of women in the traditional

family may also be a factor. The status of female adults in the family has been closer to that of the child. The man of the house is still called the "head" of the family. He may, because of the difference in status, consider the winning over of a child to be demeaning to his station. Future studies are needed to determine the basic social processes in stepmother families.

3. The application of the theory of integrative discipline to the broad area of middle management requires study. It is suggested here that the theory is sufficiently general to be applicable to a variety of social conditions where a problem of discipline and integration exists.

SUMMARY

This chapter has summarized the theory of integrative discipline as it relates to the substantive area of stepfather families. The applicability of the theory for health professionals dealing with stepfather families has been suggested. The continuum-like quality of integration and disintegration suggests the processes which integrate the family and contrasts them with the processes of disintegration. Through the use of integrative processes, discipline can be carried out under structural conditions which are characterized by equality of participation. As a result of the present study, it is clear that the guidelines offered for intact families from other sources may be inappropriate for stepfather

families. Especially inappropriate is the suggestion of an authoritarian approach of childrearing where the parents form an enforcement front to coerce the child into changing his behavior. Classes offered through the public school system have been suggested as an avenue for reaching the stepfather family, because "group" carries with it the stigma of problem orientation, while a class is a place where students go to learn.

The theory of integrative discipline has been abstracted and suggestions have been made for its applicability on a more general level to other areas. Finally, suggestions have been made for further research, which may address questions generated by the present study.

Footnotes

1. From Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, "The Practical Use of Awareness Theory," in Awareness of Dying. (1965, p. 259).
2. For this information I am indebted to Adelaide Zahr, Director of Adult Education, Parents Without Partners, San Mateo, California, chapter.

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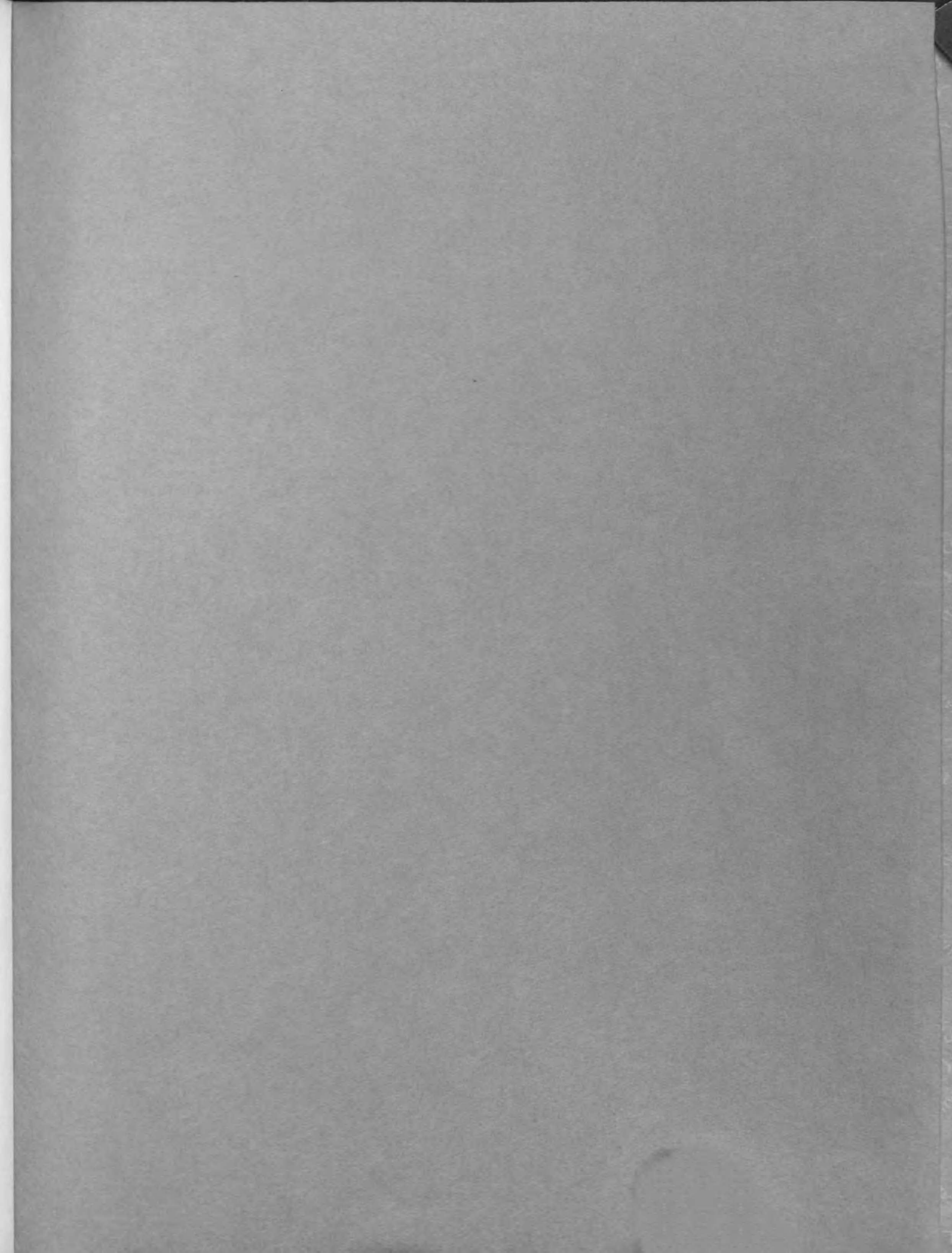
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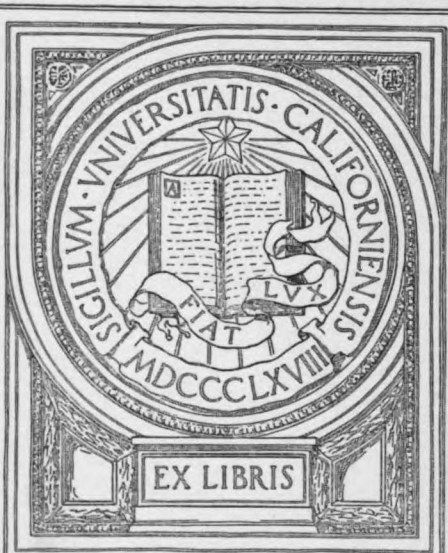
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